

JESUS
CHRIST
OUR
PASSOVER

VICTOR PAUL WIERWILLE

JESUS CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

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*To my sisters
Lydia Elizabeth Wierwille Kuck
Sevilla Magdalen Wierwille Henkener
and my Brother
Reuben Adolph Wierwille*

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PREFACE

To understand the significance of Jesus Christ as our Passover is to come face to face with God’s magnificent plan of all ages. This research study encompasses the events of two critical months of God’s intervention in human history. After the introduction, which sets the content and context of events, the book begins a scrutiny of the Biblical record from six days before Jesus’ crucifixion, through the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, and, finally, the great day of Pentecost.

During my four decades of research and teaching of Biblical and systematic theology, my studies have consistently brought me back to the subject of this work: the cornerstone of all history, Jesus Christ. The two-month period from before Passover to the day of Pentecost is the apex and fulcrum of all human experience and spiritual history to date.

Many others have studied and published works that have focused on certain aspects of this period. However, few have attempted to cover the entire period minutely, which is absolutely necessary for a full understanding and appreciation of what Jesus Christ accomplished for all men. We believe that the present work is vital and unique in both scope and significance.

In endeavoring to rightly divide God's Word for this work, my search has taken me to old sources as well as current ones. It has involved the help and advice of many excellent researchers and scholars in the fields of Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Eastern culture; history, and figures of speech. It has necessitated strict attention to the authority of God's inspired Word as well as to the many details that can be searched out of the scriptural records and to the research keys necessary for proper handling of that Word.

Several factors should be recognized by the research student inquiring into this subject, one of which is that the four Gospels simply do not record all that occurred during this time period. The Gospel of John states this truth specifically.

John 21:25:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Another factor a student of the Scriptures should recognize is that it can be difficult for those of us living

in the Occident to fully appreciate, understand, and recapture the Eastern customs and expressions found in God's Word. Thanks to the work of K.C. Pillai in orientalisms and E.W. Bullinger's work in figures of speech, major aspects of God's Word have been clarified.

Finally, we do not have the original manuscripts written by the Gospel writers. Thus we must carefully scrutinize and compare copies, translations, and versions of texts extant to determine what the original documents said.

While there are challenges in every Biblical research study, God has instructed us to rightly divide His Word (II Timothy 2:15) without private interpretation (II Peter 1:20), and to teach it with authority and conviction (Titus 2:15) as well as humility (II Timothy 2:24 and 25). To be able to do this must be available. We are not to water down or handle the Word of God deceitfully (II Corinthians 2:17 and 4:2). Therefore, it is the foremost responsibility of a researcher to do his utmost for God's highest, recognizing that the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35). To the best of my ability, these principles of research according to the dictates of God's Word have been adhered to in *Jesus Christ Our Passover*.

Because of the immense importance and scope of this work and the limiting factors cited above, I do not expect that this work is the final word on the subject. Although I believe it is the most exhaustive and most accurate work done to date, there is more to be learned

Preface

in the accuracy and integrity of God's Word. God's Word is the storehouse of truth, and as new light is learned on this topic, it will be presented in future editions. However, I believe the work on the subject of *Jesus Christ Our Passover* will bless you abundantly as you study it, deepening your knowledge and appreciation of God and His wonderful Son.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many dedicated people have assisted me in the preparation and publication of this book, a project which I have worked on periodically for two decades. However, in the early 1970s, I solicited the cooperation of Walter J. Cummins, chairman of our Research department, to check my research thoroughly and critically concerning all the Gospel records starting with six days before the death of Jesus Christ to the day of Pentecost.

After various facets of the subject had been worked in detail, I made the first presentation of this entire subject to a special Biblical research team in the spring of 1974 in a week-long seminar entitled "The Last Week of Jesus' Life." From this seminar a working manuscript was developed, the embryo of this book.

The first full-scale manuscript of *Jesus Christ Our Passover* was completed in July of 1978. Upon its

Acknowledgments

completion, another week-long Biblical research seminar was held at The Way Family Ranch, Camp Gunnison, near Gunnison, Colorado, to again study and refine previous research.

In late September of 1978 the research team was assembled for a number of days to again collectively and critically study and evaluate the revised manuscript. Similar meetings of the research staff were held in August 1979 and April 1980. Providing expertise in important fields were Walter J. Cummins in Greek, Bernita Jess and Gary R. Curtis in Aramaic, Bo Reahard in Eastern customs, John Crouch in figures of speech, Chip Stansbury in history and documentation, and Michele C. Curtis in organizing and editing the material. Donna Randall, my research secretary for many years, helped immeasurably in evaluating the material and contributing to it. Karen W. Martin, my daughter, took primary responsibility for the editing of the manuscript.

Rhoda Becker Wierwille, assisted by Joyce Ziegler, Marian Moczydlowski, and others in The Way International's Word Processing department, typed and retyped the manuscript with love and dedication. Rosalie Rivenbark, Tom Plain and the staff of our Way Publications department finalized the manuscript for publication.

As is evident, this book is truly the result of a large team effort with years of research, study, checking, and rechecking. Others besides those named above have been

Acknowledgements

consulted and have assisted in the production of this work. To all who have contributed to *Jesus Christ Our Passover* out of their love for God and for the accuracy of His Word, I am most thankful and grateful. Of course, the final contents are my responsibility.

PART I

JESUS CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to I Corinthians 5:7 Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. To fully appreciate the reality of Jesus Christ as the Passover lamb who fulfilled the Old Testament law and made possible the Age of Grace, we must understand the significance of the Passover.

What circumstances prompted God's ordaining an observance called "Passover"? To understand this, we must understand the historical background of Joseph in Egypt. Joseph brought his father, Israel, and his eleven brothers and their families to Egypt when they were suffering from famine in Canaan. Joseph's family was graciously welcomed to Egypt by Pharaoh. As time passed, the king died, as did Israel, Joseph, and his brothers. Now their children had children and as their numbers increased greatly, the native Egyptians felt

threatened by them and made slaves of these foreigners. After the children of Israel had been in Egypt for many years, God chose Moses to lead them out of bondage and back to the Promised Land. When Moses repeatedly asked the Pharaoh of Egypt to let the people of Israel depart from his land, the Pharaoh stubbornly refused; and as a result, a series of plagues befell Egypt.

In the tenth and final plague, the angel of death, “the destroyer,” passed through the entire land of Egypt and killed the firstborn of every household, both humans and animals. To provide protection from the angel of death for the children of Israel, God instructed the people of Israel to sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed lamb on the two side doorposts of the house and on the upper doorpost, called a lintel. The destroyer, upon seeing the blood, had to “pass over” that house and could not destroy its firstborn. Hence the sacrificial lamb was called the “Passover” lamb. In carrying out this commandment from God to use the slain lamb, the children of Israel protected themselves from the destroyer. The twelfth chapter of Exodus relates all this information.

Exodus 12:1,7-13,21-27:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

Eat not of it raw, nor sodden [boiled] at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance [innards] thereof.

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall bum with fire.

And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: *it is* the Lord’s passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord.

And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*.

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

There are two significant aspects of this Passover Iamb: its flesh and its blood. The flesh was to be roasted and eaten. In eating the lamb's flesh the believing children of Israel were in reality eating physical health to themselves. When the children of Israel left Egypt, after eating the Passover as commanded by God, there was "not one feeble *person*" among them.¹

While partaking of the flesh of the Iamb brought health to the people of Israel, the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb was also significant. It was the lamb's blood sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts which caused the destroyer to pass over them, sparing them. The shedding of the lamb's blood was representative of the atonement or covering for sin. By the shedding

1. Psalms 105:37: "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes." Also see the record in II Chronicles 30:20 where the Lord healed the people after they ate the Passover.

of blood the children of Israel were spared from the consequences of their sins. This truth of atonement by shed blood can be seen in both Leviticus and Hebrews.

Leviticus 17:11:

For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

Hebrews 9:22:

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

According to Exodus 12, this Passover sacrifice and meal was to be carried out in the families of Israel. First a lamb was selected and killed. The lamb was a male of the first year, without spot and without blemish. Its blood was put into a basin and then hyssop was dipped into the blood and used to strike the blood across the lintels and doorposts. The flesh of the lamb was roasted and eaten along with bitter herbs. This was the first meal of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Numbers 9:12:

They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

Exodus 12:10:

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall bum with fire.

In the killing of the sacrificial lamb, no bone was to be broken, and any part of the lamb not eaten was to be burned.

After this first Passover recorded in Exodus 12, the children of Israel were commanded to celebrate this event annually. According to Numbers 9:3, the second Passover, which occurred in the wilderness, was observed in the same manner as the first.

Numbers 9:3:

In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.

Shortly before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, God instructed Moses to declare to them procedures for subsequent Passovers, including some changes. The record of this is found in Deuteronomy 16.

Deuteronomy 16:4-7,16:

And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.

Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee:

But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

And thou shalt roast and eat *it* in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.

Thus some additions and changes were made. The lamb was to be killed outside the gates of the city, a commandment to go into effect after they settled in the Promised Land. The lamb was to be killed, roasted, and eaten at the place God would choose to place His name. At this same place and time, the men were to appear before the Lord for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Bible tells us in scriptures written after the books of Moses that the place the Lord “shall choose to place his name” was the area of Jerusalem, the city where the Temple was located.² These are the basic changes set forth in God’s Word concerning the Passover. Later religious laws made by man, not commanded by God, gradually brought about other changes and additions. Thus careful distinction must be made between those changes which were God-ordained and those which were made by man without God’s sanction.

What about the timing of this important event of Passover? The significance of this will become evident

2. I Kings 8:29, 9:3, II Chronicles 8:12-15, 35:1-19, Ezra 6:15-22, Luke 2:41 and 42.

later when we consider Jesus Christ as the Passover lamb. The Old Testament again gives very specific information.

Exodus 12:1 and 2:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

The month called “Abib” was in the spring of the year, during our March and April. It was called “Abib” until the kingdom of Judah was taken captive to Babylon many years later. As a result of the Babylonian influence, God’s people began to call this month “Nisan.” We can see this change from Abib to Nisan in the Book of Esther.

Esther 3:7:

In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, that *is*, the month Adar.

So the first month of the Hebrew calendar was first called Abib, but later became known as Nisan. This study will use the term “Nisan” throughout for the sake of clarity.

Exodus 12:3-6:

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the

tenth *day* of this month [Nisan] they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house:

And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

God’s instruction to Israel was to select the Passover lambs on the tenth of Nisan. Then they were to keep them separated from the other sheep and care for them until the fourteenth. During this time from the selection on the tenth to the close of the fourteenth was a period of preparation for the Passover meal and the Feast. The fourteenth was known as a day of preparation, for it was on this day that the lamb was slain and prepared for eating.³

In dealing with the subject of the time of the Passover there are some other points which need to be understood. For example, the beginning of the day according to Biblical reckoning was different from ours. In modern times, midnight marks the end of one day and the beginning of the next. However in Biblical times, sunset, not midnight, was the start of a new day. To illustrate:

3. See Appendix 1, “The Preparations for the Feast.”

the fifth of Nisan ended at sunset and at the same time the sixth began. It would remain the sixth until the following sunset. Although the time of sunset would vary according to the time of year, for convenience in teaching and understanding we mark sunset at 6:00 P.M.

With this understanding, we now look at Exodus 12:6 and scrutinize the phrase “in the evening,” which is the time of day the Passover lamb was slain. In Hebrew, the phrase “in the evening” is *ben ha-arbayim*, meaning literally, “between the evenings.” This is an expression which, according to evidence from the Talmud, refers to the period between 2:30 and 3:30 in the afternoon.⁴ According to the historian Josephus, the practice in the first century A.D. was to begin slaughtering the Passover lambs at the ninth hour, our 3 P.M.⁵ This is corroborated by Deuteronomy 16:6 where the Passover sacrifice is to take place “at even, at the going down of the sun.” This does not refer to sunset, but it means during the afternoon when the sun is visibly declining in the western sky.

The timing of the Passover sacrifice becomes very significant when we study the time of Jesus Christ’s

4. *Pesahim* 5.1; 1. Epstein, ed., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Pesahim* (London: Soncino Press, 1967), p. 58a; Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah Translated from the Hebrew* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 137-141; and Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 12-14. Some scholars believe “between the evenings” refers to the entire afternoon from the sun’s decline from its highest point at noon to its decline below the horizon at sunset.

5. Josephus *Jewish War* 6.9.3; also William Whiston, trans., *Josephus: Complete Works* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1960), p. 558.

death. The lamb had to be slain on the fourteenth of Nisan before sunset, because sunset began the fifteenth, a new day. Leviticus 23, Numbers 9, Joshua 5, II Chronicles 35, and Ezra 6 further corroborate this.

Leviticus 23:5:

In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even [“between the evenings”] is the Lord’s passover.

Numbers 9:3 and 5:

In the fourteenth day of this month, at even [“between the evenings”], ye shall keep it.

And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even [“between the evenings”].

Joshua 5:10:

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

II Chronicles 35:1:

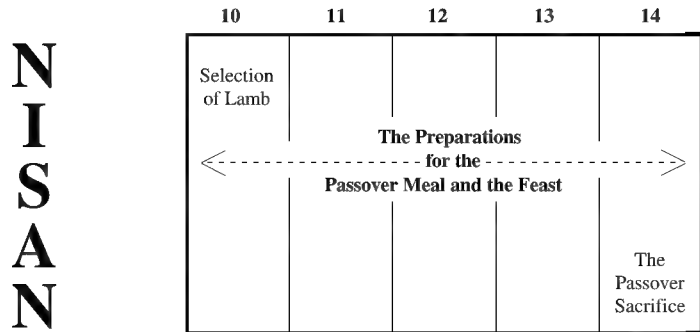
they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

Ezra 6:19:

And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

God’s Word repeatedly establishes that the Passover lamb was killed during the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan.⁶ After this killing, the lamb would need to be prepared for eating.

6. The law also had a provision so that those who were considered unclean or had been out of town when the Passover was observed in Nisan could



Exodus 12:8

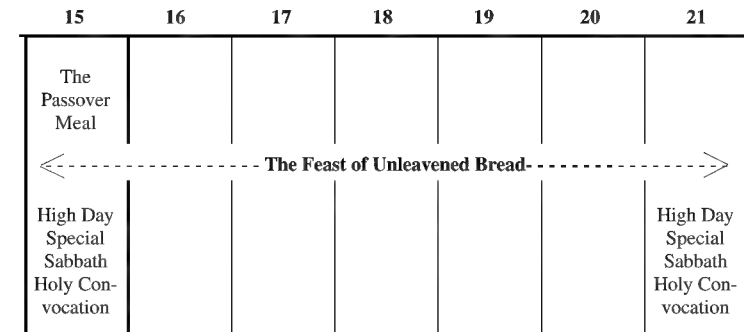
And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

The Passover lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It was to be eaten “in that night,” after sunset and before midnight.⁷ Thus, the Passover meal would actually be eaten on the fifteenth of Nisan.

The Passover meal, eaten in the night, was the first meal of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. To this extent Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread overlap. Because this meal is eaten at the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, these two celebrations are closely related.

partake of the Passover in the second month, Numbers 9:10-12: “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.”

7. The meal had to be eaten before midnight, since that is when the destroyer smote the land of Egypt in Exodus 12:29.



Since the Passover was part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the preparations for the Passover would obviously be part of the preparations for the entire Feast. The Temple and private homes were to be cleansed of all leaven and other contaminations that would defile Israel for the Feast. Also, all priests and Levites went through a personal, legal cleansing, as did all other participants.⁸

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began of the fifteenth and continued through sunset closing the twenty-first of Nisan—a seven-day feast. No leavened bread was to be eaten during this time, and the first day and the last days of the Feast were to be days of holy convocation, Sabbaths, in which no servile work was done.

Exodus 12:15-20:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

8. Scriptures stating these preparations can be found in Exodus 12:15, Numbers 9:6, 19:11-22, II Chronicles 29:4 and 5, II Chronicles 30 and John 11:55.

And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger [foreigner, proselyte] , or born in the land.

Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Leviticus 23:6-8:

And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day *is* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began at the sunset (“even”) which ended the fourteenth and began the fifteenth of Nisan. The Feast continued until the sunset

which closed the twenty-first. Except for the Passover meal, no specific times of the day were given for meal-times. However, during the seven days of the Feast all bread consumed was to be unleavened.⁹

Now in understanding Biblical timekeeping, we need to study the “watches.” The period between sunset and sunrise was divided into watches rather than hours. Timekeeping by means of sundials was impossible after sunset, so in Old Testament times there were three watches during the course of a night, each lasting about four hours, thus marking time through the night in a general way.¹⁰ The first watch, the evening watch, lasted from sunset to 10:00 P.M. The second watch, the middle watch, went from 10:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.¹¹ The third watch, the morning watch, was from 2:00 A.M. to sunrise.¹²

By New Testament times, Roman timekeeping had increased the number of watches from three to four. The first, the evening watch, was from sunset to

9. See Appendix 2, “The Biblical Significance of Leaven.”

10. Psalms 63:6: “when I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the *night* watches.” The specific times given above for each watch must be understood as approximate.

11. Judges 7:19: “so Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.”

12. Exodus 14:24: “And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.”

1 Samuel 11:11: “And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.”

9:00 P.M. The second, the midnight watch, was from 9:00 P.M. to 12:00 midnight. The third, called the cock-crowing watch, went from midnight to 3:00 A.M. The fourth, the morning watch, went from 3:00 A.M. to sunrise. These are all referred to in Mark 13:35.¹³

The daylight period, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into twelve equal segments of time called “hours.” Since this daylight period varied in length depending upon the time of the year, the hours would also vary in length. An hour would vary from forty-nine minutes on the shortest day in winter to seventy-one minutes on the longest day in summer.¹⁴ During the Passover season in the spring of the year, an hour was close to a sixty-minute hour. For the sake of clarity as we study Nisan, we will place sunrise at 6:00 A.M., the third hour at 9:00 A.M., the sixth hour at noon, the ninth hour at 3:00 P.M., and sunset at 6:00 P.M.

In the Biblical culture, the days of the week were not referred to by name, but by number. What we call Sunday was called the first day of the week. Monday was the second day, Tuesday the third, and so on. Our Saturday was called the seventh day or the weekly Sabbath. All of these points are really very simple, yet lack of understanding in these basics has caused tremendous confusion in comprehending the events leading up to and including Jesus’ crucifixion.

13. Mark 13:35: “watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning.”

14. James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible* (reprint ed., Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1972), pp. 429-430.

Throughout the course of this study we will be using Biblical time reckoning unless otherwise indicated. In referring to a date, I will be treating it as beginning at sunset rather than midnight. When I make reference to the preparation, the Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it will be in terms of what I have just covered about those events. When I refer to “hours” or “watches,” it will be in terms of the Biblical usage as shown above. All of these things are fundamental in understanding the last week before the crucifixion.

* * * *

Having this background, we can now look specifically at Jesus Christ’s final week of natural life. Once the exact day on which Jesus Christ died is pinpointed, all other times can easily be calculated because we have a point of reference from which to count forward and backward in time. So our study must answer the question, On what day did Jesus Christ die? Matthew 12 contains basic information which begins to answer this question.

Matthew 12:40:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Tradition has taught that Jesus Christ died at 3:00 P.M. on Good Friday and that he arose on early Easter Sunday morning. Yet the above scripture says that the Son of man would be “in the heart of the earth”—that is, buried—for three days and three nights. People have tried to reconcile this verse with tradition by saying that any portion of a day can be called “a day.” That is true, when the word “day” is used by itself. However, when in the Bible the words “day” and “night” are used together, a literal period of twenty-four hours is denoted. Matthew 12:40 does not say just “three days”; it says “three days and three nights.” Therefore, even if one were to press the traditional position of an interment lasting from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning, we can count three days with Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but only two nights with Friday night and Saturday night. One night is still missing. The evidence is quite clear that something is wrong with this traditional teaching. So let’s put traditional teachings from our minds and look at the accuracy of God’s Word when studying time. While looking for the specific day that Jesus died and was buried, we can first note the time at which he died.

Matthew 27:46 and 50:

And about the ninth hour [about our 3:00 P.M.] Jesus cried with a loud voice....

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost [died].

Jesus Christ died around three o’clock in the afternoon. However, as carefully indicated by Matthew 12:40, the counting of the three days and three nights was not to be marked from the time of death, but from the time of burial. Understanding that he died around three in the afternoon, we must still determine the day and the date on which he died.

John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies [of the crucified men] should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

The failure to rightly divide this verse has caused tremendous confusion concerning the day of the week of the crucifixion. People have taught that Jesus died on the day before the weekly Sabbath. Since the weekly Judean¹⁵ Sabbath was Saturday, they have said he died on Friday. However, John 19:31 does not say that Jesus died on the day before the weekly Sabbath. It clearly and explicitly states that he died shortly before “the sabbath day” and that “that sabbath day was an high day.” A “high day” is a special Sabbath, a Sabbath that can occur on any day of the week, not just Saturday. It is a special day of rest that may come in the middle of the week such as our Christmas often does, depending

15. See Appendix 3, “Jew and Judean.” The use of the word “Jew” can cause confusion in the mind of the modern reader.

on the calendar year. We read previously from Leviticus that the fifteenth of Nisan was a day of holy convocation in which no servile work was to be done. The fifteenth of Nisan was considered a “high day,” a high Sabbath, a special day of rest, because it was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In that night, which began the fifteenth of Nisan, the children of Israel celebrated with the Passover meal.

The final day of preparation for the Passover was the fourteenth of Nisan. Since this was also the day before the special Sabbath, this was the day on which Jesus Christ died. That is what John 19:31 clearly teaches when it is read with Biblical understanding.

By the time the events recorded in John 19:31 occurred, Jesus was already dead on the cross. He had died around 3:00 P.M. The Judeans did not want the bodies to hang on the crosses after sundown, which was when the new day began, for that new day would be a special Sabbath. The Judeans wanted the corpses to be removed and buried before the special Sabbath began.

Luke 23:52-54:

This *man* [Joseph of Arimathea] went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath [the special Sabbath of the fifteenth of Nisan] drew on.

This record in Luke establishes the fact that Jesus Christ was laid in a sepulchre, he was buried, sometime between 3:00 P.M. and sunset on the fourteenth of Nisan. Once one recognizes that he died and was buried before a special Sabbath, a high day, rather than the weekly Sabbath, the entire record clarifies itself.

John 19:41 and 42:

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day* [omit “day”]; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Mark 15:42:

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day [“the day” is omitted in the Greek texts] before the sabbath [the special Sabbath, the high day].

God's Word is so clear about the timing of Jesus' burial that it is surprising so many of us have missed it for so long. All four Gospels readily concur that Jesus died by 3:00 P.M. and was buried before sunset on the fourteenth of Nisan. Now let us see what the Gospel accounts say regarding the time of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Once we have determined the day of his resurrection, we may count backwards three days and three nights to pinpoint the day of his death and burial.

Luke 24:1-6:

Now upon the first *day* of the week [our Sunday], very early in the morning, they [the women] came unto the sepulchre,

bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

The first day of the week was Sunday. Upon arriving early that morning, the women discovered that Jesus' body was gone. Jesus Christ had already been resurrected. It has been inferred from this that he had just risen before the women arrived that Sunday morning. God's Word does not say that. Look at the records in Mark and John.

Mark 16:2 and 6:

And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

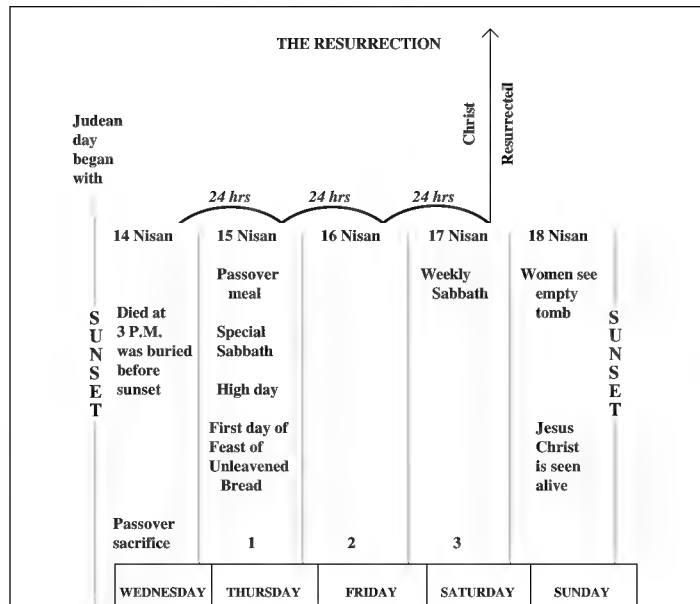
John 20:1:

The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

None of the Gospel records say that Jesus arose from the dead on Sunday morning, the first day of the week. What the records do establish is that Jesus Christ was resurrected by the time these people arrived at the tomb early Sunday morning. Now we can calculate from the truths we have learned. According to Matthew 12:40, Jesus was to be buried for three days and three nights, a full seventy-two hours. It is interesting to note that, according to Judean law, identification of a corpse was to be given within three days after its death, before the body decomposed beyond recognition.

Since Jesus Christ was buried on the fourteenth of Nisan after 3:00 P.M. and before sunset and had to be buried for three days and three nights, then he must have risen on the seventeenth of Nisan after 3:00 P.M. and before sunset. When the women arrived at the tomb early Sunday morning, the tomb was already empty. So putting all these facts together, Jesus Christ must have been raised the day before Sunday, late on Saturday afternoon after 3:00 P.M. but before sunset.

By these simple calculations, the timing of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes perfectly clear. Counting back three days and nights from Saturday afternoon, we come to Wednesday afternoon. Jesus



Christ died at 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, the fourteenth of Nisan, and was buried before sunset. This was the last day of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was also the day and time the Passover lamb was to be slain.

To review this important information, Jesus Christ was buried on Wednesday afternoon after 3:00 P.M. and before sunset. Three days and three nights later, after 3:00 P.M. and before sunset on Saturday, the seventeenth of Nisan, Jesus Christ was raised by God from the dead. On early Sunday morning, his disciples visiting the tomb found that he had already risen. The accuracy of God's Word is breathtaking!

Some may wonder how Jesus Christ could be in the grave three days and three nights and still be raised the third day.¹⁶ The answer is now very simple. Since Jesus died very late on Wednesday, the first day would be counted as Thursday. Friday was then the second day and Saturday the third. Since he was raised late on Saturday, he was raised on the third day,¹⁷ after he had been in the grave three days and three nights—seventy-two hours.

Another question about the timing of Jesus' burial has come from Luke.

Luke 24:21:

But we [the two men walking to Emmaus] trusted that it had been he which would have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day [Sunday] is the third day since these things were done.

People have said that this verse contains a discrepancy because it says that Sunday was "the third day since" the crucifixion.¹⁸ This is a misunderstanding. The word "since" literally means "away from." Jesus died late on Wednesday. The third day "away from" Wednesday

16. Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Also see: I Corinthians 15:4, Matthew 17:23, 20:19, Mark 9:31, 10:34, Luke 9:22, 24:7 and 46, Acts 10:40.

17. Victor Paul Wierwille, "The Day Jesus Christ Died," *The Word's Way* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1971), pp. 187-199.

18. Sunday could certainly not be called "the third day since" the crucifixion if he died late on Friday. That would make Friday the first day "since" the crucifixion, even though it supposedly occurred on Friday. Thus, this verse, even traditionally interpreted, makes impossible a Friday crucifixion.

would be the fourth day. It means three full days had gone by. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday had passed, making Sunday the fourth day. The Greek literally reads, "But surely also together with all these things, it brings a third day away from which these things occurred." That is how accurate God's Word is. Three other translations of this same verse, Luke 24:21, should be noted by students of God's Word.

... but he is dead, and that is three days ago!¹⁹

... Moreover, three days have already passed, since all those events occurred.²⁰

... and lo, three days have passed since all these things have occurred.²¹

In context, the men had not believed the report that Jesus had been raised on the third day as promised (Luke 24:6-11,22,23). In their minds, Jesus was legally and totally dead. It was an irreversible fact. Three days had come and gone and their supposed Messiah was still reckoned dead. In disappointment they were going home. That is the great importance of the observation of the two men on their way to Emmaus.

19. James Moffatt, trans., *The Bible: A New Translation*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1935).

20. Gerrit Verkuyl, ed. and trans., *The Holy Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969).

21. James Murdock, trans., *The Syriac New Testament Translated into English from the Peshitto Version* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1851; 9th ed., Boston: H.L. Hastings & Sons, 1915). This reading can also be verified by two of the oldest manuscripts in Estrangelo Aramaic: the Sinaitic Palimpsest and the Curetonian Syriac.

There are some other interesting observations that can be made about the number three, since Jesus Christ was buried three days and three nights. Three denotes completeness in its Biblical usage.²² It is used of a time of darkness, judgment, and separation, when all seems hopeless. The end of a three-day period may be marked by life, release, and restoration.²³ Jesus was not in a temporary coma or similar state. His death was complete. Thus, in being raised "on the third day" after "three days and three nights" in the grave, Jesus Christ was raised from complete death to complete life, fulfilling every legality.

In Old Testament law as stated in Numbers 19:11 and 12, a man who contracted defilement through touching a dead body was required to purify himself on the third day of his cleansing period. Also, in Leviticus 7:17 and 18, the flesh of the peace offering (when offered as a vow or a voluntary offering) was not to be kept beyond the third day, but was to be burnt on that day as unfit for food. According to Jonah 1:17, the Prophet Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. When the great sea creature spit him out onto dry land, Jonah was delivered. God's Word utilizes this historical incident with Jonah as a prophetic

22. For a fuller exposition of the number three's relation to completeness, see E.W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture* (1894; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1967), pp. 107-122.

23. Study the use of three in Genesis 1:9-13 (where the dry land first appears above the water and life is first brought forth by the earth). Also, note the following scriptures: Genesis 40:12 and 13; 42:17 and 18; Exodus 10:22 and 23; II Samuel 21:1; I Kings 17:1; 18:1; Hosea 6:2; Jonah 1:17; Luke 2:46; and Acts 9:9,17 and 18.

picture of how long Jesus would be in the grave. Jesus Christ fulfilled this. He was absolutely marked out as God's Son by being raised, delivered from death, on the third day.²⁴

That Jesus died and was buried on Wednesday is absolutely established beyond a shadow of a doubt. Jesus Christ did not die on Friday. Nor was he resurrected on Sundays. When we strip away the cloak of tradition, God's Word unfolds in brilliant simplicity.

However, just because he died on Wednesday, I am not advocating that we change our modern commemorative events to Good Wednesday rather than Good Friday. God's Word says we are not to be bound to special days, times, or hours.²⁵ But we must adhere to the accuracy of God's rightly-divided Word if we are to stand approved before Him and enjoy the abundance of His truth. We can afford to do no less, regardless of man's tradition and theology.

In dying on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, Jesus Christ fulfilled the law as *the* Passover lamb. He died for the sins of mankind. During John the Baptist's ministry, he recognized that Jesus Christ would be the

24. There are other numerical points of interest. Jesus Christ, being raised on Saturday, was resurrected on the seventh day of the week. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection. The risen Christ first appeared to mankind on Sunday, the eighth day (the first day of the week), signifying a new beginning.

25. Galatians 4:9-11: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

supreme sacrificial lamb offered by God as the consummate atonement for you and for me.

John 1:29 and 36:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Jesus was the lamb of God. And as we learn what Jesus Christ accomplished as the Passover lamb, we can appreciate the greatness of our redemption.

I Peter 1:18 and 19:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Jesus Christ was our Passover lamb, the lamb of God without blemish and without spot. He died at the exact hour that the Judeans were making their annual Passover sacrifices and he remained buried for a full three days and three nights.

We now have established the background and chronological framework for the rest of this research study. Keeping these truths in mind we are ready to begin a study of Jesus Christ's last week before his

crucifixion and follow it through to Pentecost. These times were the most significant and stirring in human history. What a thrilling opportunity for us to have God reveal in His Word the truth that Jesus Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us and to learn all that his sacrifice means to our lives.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EIGHTH AND NINTH OF NISAN

That Jesus Christ died at 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, the fourteenth of Nisan, has already been established in this study. We have also established that the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan was the day and time the Passover lamb was killed. With this point of reference, let us now count back six days to the eighth of Nisan, a Thursday, to proceed chronologically forward throughout this study. The Gospel of John begins setting the stage for the events of this final Passover by revealing what happened six days prior to it.

John 12:1 and 2:

Then Jesus six days before the passover [the slaying of the lamb on the fourteenth'] came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

1. The word "Passover" is used several ways Biblically. For a fuller explanation of this, see Appendix 4, "The Word 'Passover'."

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11	12	13
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

2. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8	9	10
		6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

These events took place six days before the Passover sacrifice on the fourteenth, in other words, on the eighth of Nisan and early in the evening of the ninth (since supper would take place near the time of sunset). Thus, on Thursday, the eighth of Nisan, Jesus came to Bethany and stayed for supper with Lazarus and a few others. This is how simply God's Word sets the time for this event in Bethany and the beginning of our research.

Jesus had recently raised Lazarus from the dead, and this miracle had caused no small stir in the area of Bethany and Jerusalem. As a result of the miracle many believed in Jesus, but those who did not believe became even more determined in their persecution and conspired to have Jesus put to death.

John 11:45-53:

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council [the Sanhedrin], and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

The chief priests and Pharisees who were the respected religious leaders conspired with the high priest of Israel to kill Jesus, the Son of God. Such irony exemplifies what religion can do to people. It can so blind and misdirect them that they walk in vehement opposition to the true God whom they claim to serve.

John 11:54-57:

Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.³

Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

3. "To purify themselves" relates to the week-long cleansing ceremony given in Numbers 19:11-22 where the children of Israel would purify themselves from contact with a dead body. (Also see Numbers 9:6-14.) It was also a time of purification from their presence among Gentiles of pagan lands (John 18:28, Ezra 6:20 and 21, Numbers 9:10). The Judeans would come to Jerusalem a week or so early to prepare themselves legally, physically, mentally, and spiritually for the holy occasion of Passover (II Chronicles 30:3,15-20). See Appendix 1, "The Preparations for the Feast."

Jesus was a wanted man, public enemy number one. The religious leaders were lying in wait to take him and to have him put to death. The people were not certain that he would come to Jerusalem to take part in the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread under such treacherous circumstances. In this context comes the record in John 12 when on the evening of Thursday, the eighth of Nisan, Jesus is having supper in Bethany. It is remarkable that he came to Bethany, since it was so close to the danger lurking in Jerusalem less than two miles away.

Lazarus was present at the meal as were Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha. Since Martha served the supper and Mary ministered to Jesus, the meal must have been at their house.

Other disciples were also there. It must have been an emotional time—the love among them being so great while the danger was so imminent. The events of this supper are quite significant.

John 12:1-3:

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ["a pound or" is not found in Estrangelo Aramaic] ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Mary was acting with deep gratitude when she used her finest, most expensive ointment to anoint Jesus. Its aroma pervaded the house.⁴ In the East, the act of anointing was observed when crowning a king and when expressing a joyful welcome to a household visitor. It was also observed when priests were dedicated.⁵ Oil symbolized the presence of God and anointing with oil was a Sign that God was setting a person apart. Jesus Christ was the Messiah, God's Anointed One, the king. In Bethany that evening Mary anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with an Eastern woman's glory, her hair. With great humility Mary was demonstrating that only her best was good enough for the Master. By anointing his feet, Mary magnified her willingness to serve Jesus as her lord. What a tender, loving gesture by the sister of the man whom Jesus had raised from the dead. However, not everyone present approved of this.

4. In Eastern culture ointment was kept in a small, tapering vase called an "alabaster." This vessel was originally made of a kind of soft, white marble noted for preserving the aroma of its contents. The Greek name *alabastra* was derived from the town of Alabastron, Egypt, where these vessels were designed for perfumes and fragrant ointments. Later, *all* such perfume vessels were called "alabasters" regardless of the material from which they were made. Normally, these containers would hold about a half pint of fluid. See Murdock, *The Syriac New Testament Translated*, p. 191; J. Payne Smith, ed., *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 573; and Freeman, *Manners and Customs*, pp. 379-380.

5. Exodus 30:30 and 31: "And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations."

John 12:4-6:

Then saith one of his disciples [speaking to Jesus], Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Judas objected to the costliness of Mary's gesture. The value of the ointment was three hundred pence, very great worth. That Judas "had the bag" meant that Judas was the treasurer for the disciples. He also was a thief who stole money from that bag. Jesus, perceiving Judas' weakness, spoke up and reproved his thinking.

John 12:7 and 8:

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.

After this reproving of Judas, the account in John 12 returns to the topic of the chief priests.

John 12:9-11:

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

We read before that they doubted that Jesus would dare to approach the area because of the dangers awaiting him. But many people had found out that Jesus was in Bethany. The crowds, lured by curiosity, came to see both Jesus and Lazarus. The chief priests, who before had decided to put Jesus to death, now determined that Lazarus also must die. Why did they want the death of Lazarus also? Because the testimony of one whom Jesus had raised from the dead increased popular interest in following their archenemy, Jesus of Nazareth.

John 12:12 and 13:

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The day is Friday, the ninth of Nisan, five days before Passover. On this day Christ's first entry into Jerusalem occurred. Traditional religion teaches that Jesus made one entry into Jerusalem, called the "Triumphal Entry," and that this entry took place on Palm Sunday. Such teachings are not in accordance with God's Word. When we look carefully at the Gospels, we find that Jesus entered Jerusalem a first time on Friday, the ninth of Nisan, in judgment, and a second time on Saturday, the tenth of Nisan, in blessing.

Three Gospels, John, Luke, and Mark, record the first entry of Jesus on Friday, the ninth of Nisan. Reading through these records, the facts can be seen clearly.

John 12:12-19:

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

Another account of this identical entry is found in Luke 19.

Luke 19:29-44:

And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither*.

And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

This record is given in more detail in Mark 11.

Mark 11:1-11:

And when they had come nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

And certain of them that stood said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

All three of these records complement each other with no contradiction,⁶ They are individual records of an identical event: the first entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. All these occurrences surrounding this entry occurred on Friday, the ninth of Nisan.

On this first entry into Jerusalem, only one animal, an ass's colt, was involved. By going to other scriptural accounts where a single ass's colt was involved, we can determine its Biblical significance. When a word or expression does not explain itself in the verse or in the context, we must search out how God has used it before. Previous usage sets the pattern for any subsequent usage. Furthermore, Eastern customs must be understood in order to accurately divide God's Word because the Bible is an Eastern book. For example, in

6. See Appendix 5, "Why Four Gospels?"

Eastern culture a ruler riding into town on an ass's colt was indicative of judgment. The Old Testament speaks regarding this.

Judges 5:10:

Speak, ye that ride on white asses [she-asses], ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

Judges 10:3 and 4:

And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.

And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead.

Judges 12:13 and 14:

And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.

And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years.

At one time Israel was ruled by judges who rode on white asses' colts.⁷ Riding white asses showed that they were judges. To be a judge meant much more than it does now. A judge during the time between Joshua and Kings was a man who set at right the situation of his people and then proceeded to rule over them. The first

7. Asses, especially pure white she-asses, were highly prized in the East. Only the very wealthy could afford to own one. Princes or "those that sat in judgment" rode on them. White is Biblically significant of righteous judgment, purity, and cleansing. When Christ returns in judgment, John, in Revelation 19:11, describes him as coming on a white horse.

entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on an ass's colt was as a judge coming in judgment.

There was a reason why Jesus requested this specific animal, an ass's colt. As the sons of judges in the Old Testament each rode an ass's colt, so Jesus rode in on one because he rode into Jerusalem to judge as the representative of his Father, who is the Supreme Judge, God.

The Gospel accounts tell of Jesus' beginning his trip to Jerusalem by ascending the Mount of Olives. At one point he sent two disciples into a nearby village to get an ass's colt.

Some people teach that Since Jesus wanted an ass to ride he sent his disciples to take a colt away from the first man they saw. Would the Son of God simply help himself to private property? Biblical research shows that there was a great reason for Jesus' command to his disciples and that he had a perfect right to request such an animal. This can only be understood if we understand the culture of that time.

In the East, animals were donated to the Temple for God's service and were kept in a special place. These Temple animals were usually stabled on the outskirts of town where they were always ready for Temple use. They could be used by any holy man in service to the Lord, as they were gifts to God according to Biblical culture.⁸

8. Bernita Jess, "Beasts of Burden," adapted from the teachings of Bishop K.C. Pillai, *The Way Magazine*, March/April 1969, pp. 9-11.

Mark 11:2:

And [Jesus] saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

“Whereon never man sat” was an expression dealing with ownership. It meant the animal was consecrated for God; it was God’s property, not to be used for man’s work.

Mark 11:3:

And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

All that a man had to do was say that an animal was needed in the service of the Lord and the keeper would release the animal.

Mark 11:4-7:

And they [the two disciples] went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him [the colt].

The record in Luke 19:29-35 is identical to this one in Mark 11. John 12:1 and 12 show that this happened the day after the sixth day before the Passover.

Mark 11:8 and 9:

And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The custom in those days was for people to spread their mantles before the king as he passed by. This displayed great honor and esteem. An Old Testament example of this custom is in II Kings 9.

II Kings 9:13:

Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

In Mark 11:8 and John 12:13 we see the crowd cut down palm branches and “strawed *them* in the way.” The palm branches represented joy and triumph,⁹ Great multitudes of people had gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and when they heard Jesus of Nazareth was coming, they ran out of the city to greet him enthusiastically.

9. Leviticus 23:40 and Joel 1:12 associate palm branches and joy, Freeman, *Manners and Customs*, pp. 35 8-359.

Luke 19:37 and 38:

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

John 12:15:

Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.¹⁰

At the time of Jesus' first entry, the disciples who had witnessed Lazarus' being raised from the dead spread this news to the people who were in Jerusalem.

John 12:17 and 18:

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

But there were more people than just well-wishers and curiosity-seekers attracted to the road into Jerusalem that day.

Luke 19:39 and 40:

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said

10. This last verse is a partial quote from Zechariah 9:9. The quote is used simply because of similar situations. This particular entry into Jerusalem was not a complete fulfillment of that verse. It is not even called a fulfillment. Part of the passage in Zechariah 9 is omitted in the quote to accommodate it to this new and different circumstance.

unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples [from making such joyous commotion].

And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

The "stones crying out" is a figure of speech called personification, giving inanimate objects human characteristics. The excitement in the crowd was electrifying. The common people really loved Jesus.

John 12:19:

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

The Pharisees were overcome with jealousy. They observed that the whole world was gone after Jesus. Everyone except these Pharisees seemed enthralled with this great miracle worker.

Luke 19:41:

And when he [Jesus] was come near, he beheld the city, and wept [wailed aloud] over it.

The word "wept" does not mean he shed a few tears; Jesus wailed as he overlooked the city of Jerusalem from the western slope of the Mount of Olives. His heart was rent for Jerusalem, and then he prophesied of her destruction.

Luke 19:42-44:

Saying, If thou [Jerusalem] hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

The word “visitation” is *episkopē* in the Greek meaning “inspection, overlooking,” as in judgment. Jerusalem and its inhabitants did not realize that this was the day Jesus would assess and pass judgment. That was the significance of his first entry into the city.

Mark 11:11:

And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Thus concluded the first entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. It occurred on Friday, the ninth of Nisan, five days before the Passover. At the end of the day, the judgment of Jerusalem’s destruction having been passed and Jesus Christ having “looked round about on all things” in the Temple, he returned to Bethany with his apostles where he was abiding at this time. Multitudes of people in Jerusalem had joined Jesus’ disciples in

acclaim of him that day, The religious leaders were again upset and rekindled their determination to rid themselves of this menace, Jesus. The man from Galilee had boldly entered Jerusalem and the Temple in judgment despite threats of death from the religious leaders. With this day the most unusual and tumultuous week in history began to unfold.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TENTH OF NISAN

Mark 11 relates that late on our Friday afternoon, the ninth of Nisan, Jesus returned to his friends and followers in Bethany. The next day, Saturday the tenth, he left again for Jerusalem with his disciples.¹

Mark 11:12 and 13:

And on the morrow, when they were come from [*apo*, away from] Bethany, he was hungry:

And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*.

“On the morrow” places this record on the day after the events previously recorded in Mark 11: 1-11, the events of his first entry into Jerusalem on Friday the

1. This day was the weekly Sabbath. See Appendix 6, “The Sabbath Day’s Journey.”

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11	12	13
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

2. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8	9	10
		6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

ninth. Mark 11:12 shows that time has moved ahead one day to Saturday, the tenth of Nisan.

In those days the fig tree was known as a “people’s tree,” meaning any person was permitted to eat from any fig tree. These trees were public, not private property. During the late spring, the fig tree normally blossoms with both leaves and sweet, edible buds. These buds are what Jesus intended to eat. Later these buds develop into figs. Now on this tree which Jesus passed there were leaves, but no buds; that is why it says “he found nothing but leaves.” “The time of figs was not yet” means that it was still spring, the time of buds before the time of the mature fruit.

Mark 11:14:

And Jesus answered and said unto it [the tree], No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Since there were no buds, Jesus knew there would be no fruit later. The fig tree symbolized Israel.³ Israel was not budding with fruit; she was barren. Although she appeared from a distance to be flourishing, she was in reality unfruitful. So God was being forced to cut off His special blessing to Israel. From this point forward, no fruit would come out of Israel as a nation because she had rejected God’s only-begotten Son, God’s greatest gift to her.

3. Biblically a fig tree is often associated with Israel’s status before God. See Jeremiah 8:13; Hosea 2:12; 9:10,16; Joel 1:7; Isaiah 34:4; also *The Companion Bible* (reprint ed., London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1972), pp. 339, 1357, 1410.

It was Saturday morning, the tenth of Nisan. The next gospel record following in chronological order is Matthew 21. In this record Jesus and several of his disciples stopped at the village known as Bethphage while on their way to Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:1 and 2:

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples [where were they? they “were come to Bethphage”],

Saying unto them, Go into the village [Bethphage] over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

How many animals did Jesus ask for? He asked for two—an ass and a colt with her. This record is different from the previous one on the ninth of Nisan when he asked for one animal. Why? Because here Jesus was about to make a *second* entry into Jerusalem. For years people have tried to make the accounts of the ninth and tenth of Nisan identical, even though there is only one colt in the former, while there is a mother ass and her colt in the latter. Why did Jesus make a second entry in this fashion? In Zechariah there is a prophecy of a king entering Jerusalem with two animals.

Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

A king is prophesied to come to Jerusalem who “*is just, and having salvation.*” What greater blessings can a ruler offer? The king would enter riding upon an ass, and accompanied by the colt, the foal of the ass. Two animals are involved. The above verse prophesies specifically of Jesus’ second entry, which was an entry of blessing. Note the following examples of two animals being used for blessing.

II Kings 5:15 and 17:

... I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of earth?

II Samuel 16:1-3:

And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king’s household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

And the king said, And where *is* thy master’s son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

In II Kings 5, Naaman offered the prophet Elijah a blessing; but when Elijah refused, Naaman asked Elijah

for the blessing of two mules’ burden of earth. In II Samuel 16, Ziba met David with two asses and their cargo indicating blessing and abundance.

On the day when Jesus was preparing for his second entry into Jerusalem, he specifically asked for an ass and her colt. He also repeated the instructions given the day before, to tell the animal-keepers that the Lord had need of them.

Matthew 21:4-7:

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they sat *him* thereon.

What prophecy was being fulfilled with this action? The prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. In John 12:15, where the first entry was recorded, this verse was only partially quoted: “thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt.” Here in Matthew 21 the full reference, including two animals, is quoted. Zechariah’s prophecy is fulfilled at the time of this second entry.

Matthew 21:8-11:

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way;

others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

The entry of the previous day involved the rejoicing of the disciples and the multitude of bystanders attracted by the news that the man who had raised Lazarus from the dead was coming. In this second entry the entire city responded and questioned, “Who is this?” Matthew 21:10 says “all the city was moved.” And, unwittingly, the onlooking throngs in Jerusalem were witnessing God’s selection of Jesus as the final Passover lamb. Note that this day was the tenth of Nisan, the day designated to select the Passover lamb. How remarkable that Israel was seeing the perfect lamb, the one without spot and without blemish, How perfectly God’s timetable fits with this second entry.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan, he went to the Temple as he had on the previous day. This time, however, he did not simply look around and go back to Bethany. This time he overthrew the merchants’ tables and taught the people.

Matthew 21:12 and 13:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

In Mark 11:15 this second entry is noted, but without details. Mark, however, does record this incident with the moneychangers.

Mark 11:15-17:

And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

The actions recorded here contrast vividly with the events of the previous day when Jesus Simply entered Jerusalem on the ass’s colt, went into the Temple, and looked around.⁴

4. The Gospel of Luke does not mention the second entry, though it does record this incident with the moneychangers immediately following the account of the first entry in Luke 19:45 and 46. By studying the Gospels together with the principle of narrative development, one can understand that the passage in Luke covers events over a period Longer than a single day. Recording events that occur over a long period of time without relating the time factors involved is characteristic of the Gospels, especially Luke. Other examples are the events of Luke 24:35-53 which span a period of forty days and Luke 19:47—20:1 which is a passage summarizing events over a general period of time. Luke 19:45 and 46 occur on the tenth of Nisan, the day following the events in Luke 19:29-44.

The record of the moneychangers in Mark 11:15-17 is another key in determining that the entry described in Matthew 21:1-11 occurred the day after the first entry. The words “on the morrow” of Mark 11:12 clearly separate the events of Mark 11:11 and Mark 11:15-17, thus making absolute the reality of Jesus’ two distinct and uniquely Significant entries into Jerusalem. Only by recognizing that the Gospels complement each other will one see the great accuracy with which God sets this forth.

When Jesus went into the Temple during his second entry, he was completely familiar with the tradition of the Temple market. The Temple market was situated in the outer courts of the Temple. There merchants exchanged money and sold wine, salt, oil, sacrificial animals, and other necessities used by the worshippers. The market was a lucrative business for both the merchants and the religious leaders of the Temple. However, the sin to which Jesus objected was not that lucrative commerce was conducted in the Temple area, but rather the corruption and hypocrisy involved—the setting of second-rate goods at first-rate prices. The Temple market had become dishonest, a den of thieves. Jesus was not in any way cruel or physically abusive to these men; he just pointedly told them to get out. Although he did not touch any of the merchants, he did

overthrow their tables and seats.⁵ A similar situation was recorded by Malachi.

Malachi 1:7 and 8:

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord *is* contemptible.

And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.

To sell polluted bread and crippled animals for offerings to the Lord was in complete contradiction to the Word of God which specified that only the best animals were to be offered. The Temple had become the center of dishonest business dealings, all in the name of religion. Therefore, Jesus came in and cleansed the Temple. In addition, this cleansing was essential for the Temple to be properly prepared and cleansed for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The record continues in Matthew 21:14.

5. We should note that this is a completely different occasion from the event recorded in John 2:15 which took place earlier in his ministry. John 2:15 and 16 reads: “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all [the sheep and oxen] out of the temple, and [“and” is “both” in the text] the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” Jesus drove out the four-legged animals with a whip; he poured out the money and overthrew the tables (inanimate objects). He then used persuasion to authoritatively tell the people to take their dove sacrifices and leave. He never laid a whip to a human being as tradition would have us believe.

Matthew 21:14-16:

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

And when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Out of the mouths of those humble enough to believe, God had perfected praise to Himself and His Son. After cleansing the Temple, Jesus healed the blind and lame there. Of course, his teachings and powerful deeds again incensed the religious leaders.

Mark 11:18 and 19:

And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

And when even was come, he went out of the city.

Matthew 21:17:

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

So Jesus, having been designated by God as the Passover lamb, finally left Jerusalem around Sunset on Saturday and returned to Bethany.

Let's briefly recount the events of Saturday, the tenth of Nisan, which terminated at sunset. First of all, Jesus cursed a fig tree that would bear no fruit. He then entered into Jerusalem with two animals to indicate the blessing he was bringing to Israel. With the masses of Jerusalem looking on, Jesus was selected as God's consummate Passover lamb. He cleansed the Temple, healed the sick, and taught the Word of God. And, once again, the religious leaders were irate and frustrated by Jesus Christ's show of power and boldness; again they vowed to destroy him. Finally Jesus returned to lodge in Bethany with the family of Lazarus who loved him. Thus Saturday, the tenth of Nisan, drew to a close.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ELEVENTH OF NISAN

The eleventh of Nisan has come to be known as “Palm Sunday,” named for the palm branches involved with Jesus’ first entry’ and possibly with his second entry into Jerusalem.² Tradition has combined these two entries into one and the same event, and has made them identical, saying they occurred on Sunday. We have seen that God’s Word clearly shows that these two events were two distinct entries occurring on Friday and on Saturday. To find out what actually happened on Sunday the eleventh of Nisan, we must continue the chronological record beginning in Mark 11.

1. John 12:13: “Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *Is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Palm branches represent joy and triumph.

2. Matthew 21 :8: “And a very great multitude spread theft garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.”

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11 Jerusalem at Temple Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	12	13
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

3. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8 6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	9 1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	10 Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

Mark 11:20:

And in the morning [this is the Sunday morning after the record in Mark 11:12-19, which was on Saturday], as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

Jesus had cursed this very fig tree the previous day while on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, as stated in Mark 11:12-19. Now, less than twenty-four hours later, the tree had already dried up. This amazed Peter.

Mark 11:21-24:

And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God [originally, "Have the believing of God"].

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

Jesus used this fig tree to teach and to demonstrate for his disciples the law of believing. Having cursed the tree on Saturday morning as they were traveling from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples passed by the fig tree on Sunday morning and found it dried up from the roots. Jesus paused to teach his disciples the great law of believing, and then they proceeded to

Jerusalem. This brings us to a similar, though not identical, event in Matthew 21.

Matthew 21:18:

Now in the morning [the eleventh of Nisan, Sunday morning; we have seen the events of Matthew 21:1-17 to be on Saturday] as he returned into [*eis*] the city, he hungered.

This event occurred on the same morning that we just read about in Mark 11:20. Here in Matthew 21:18, however, Jesus had returned *into* (*eis*) the city of Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:19:

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only. . . .

Just like the fig tree of Mark 11: 12 and 13 which grew by the way leading from Bethany to Jerusalem, so this fig tree *within* Jerusalem had only leaves and no buds that could later turn into fruit. The tree in Mark had been cursed outside the city the preceding Saturday morning, and was found withered as they returned to Jerusalem on Sunday. But this tree was inside the city and was cursed there on Sunday morning. Matthew 21 notes another great difference between these two incidents.

Matthew 21:19:

and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward

for ever. And presently [immediately] the fig tree withered away.

This second fig tree withered immediately while the previous one died overnight. The first fig tree had amazed Peter. Notice how this one startled the disciples.

Matthew 21:20:

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

Once again Jesus began to teach the law of believing.

Matthew 21:21 and 22:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

For the second time that Sunday morning, Jesus demonstrated to his followers how he manifested the law of believing. He established this law to his disciples that day with two similar miracles.⁴ The first miracle involved cursing a fig tree on Saturday and finding it dried up by the next morning. The second miracle

4. Genesis 41:32 tells us that when God says something twice, it is established.

involved cursing another fig tree on Sunday morning and seeing it wither away before their eyes. This completely established for his followers the law of believing, a law which would be so crucial for the disciples to operate in their walk with God.

The incidents of two unfruitful fig trees are good examples of *similar* events being mistaken as *identical* by the casual reader. Scriptures must complement and corroborate one another; never can they contradict. Only when private interpretation and theology try to make the two cursed fig trees identical do problems arise. The two records of the fig trees will never be understood if the details are not carefully compared. That is why God's Word must be allowed to interpret itself, Time, place, and circumstances must be carefully noted, for the Scriptures cannot be broken. Nor can we manipulate them to fit our theology. They are not to be tampered with to make them say what a reader has preconceived in his mind. When God's Word is allowed to speak for itself, we see its great, wonderful, matchless perfection.

Leaving the withered fig tree behind, Jesus and his disciples entered the Temple once again. Remember, it was still the morning of Sunday, the eleventh of Nisan.

Mark 11:27:

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

Matthew 21:23:

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

With this, Jesus began a discourse in the Temple with the religious leaders. As he had done so often, he confronted their craftiness with boldness, wisdom, and the use of parables.⁵ His discourse this day was a penetrating and courageous presentation in the presence of his critics and those who were seeking to put him to death. They tried to undermine and intimidate him with tempting questions, but Jesus continually responded to them in such a way as to unmask their hypocrisy.

Jesus also gave several parables which included unmistakable references to the religious leaders present. Much of what he said was for the benefit of his many disciples present, Jesus was being confronted by Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians—three groups which normally had very little to do with each other, in fact they usually opposed each other. However, on this rare occasion, these three groups had a mutual point of agreement: to trap, humiliate, and destroy Jesus of Nazareth, who was a threat to each of their religious and political positions and followings. Jesus spoke the two great commandments and finally denounced the religious leaders in front of all. He completed his discourse with a

5. See Matthew 21:23—23:39 for the complete discourse in the Temple. It is also recorded in Mark 11:28—12:44 and Luke 20:1—21:4.

prophecy concerning Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Then he arose and left the Temple.

Mark 13:1 and 2:

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*

And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Luke 21:5 and 6:

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

The disciples wanted Jesus to admire the magnificence of the Temple. Yet, Jesus saw beyond its outward appearance and prophesied of the Temple's destruction. The Temple at this time, though beautiful and immense, was still under construction in its outer courts. The building of Herod's Temple and its courts had begun around 20 B.C. It was finally finished in 64 A.D. Six years later, in 70 A.D., the Roman general Titus destroyed the grand structure. This destruction by the Romans was the event of which Jesus prophesied.

Leaving the Temple area, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives where four of his disciples privately asked him to explain his statements.

Mark 13:3 and 4:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall *be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

In answering them, Jesus began another discourse which included items directly relating to the apostles as well as future events recorded in the Book of Revelation.⁶

Biblical students must constantly remind themselves that these teachings and prophecies from the Gospels deal basically with Israel. They do not relate to the Church of the Body to which you and I belong. The Church of the Body was a mystery, hid in God until revealed to the Apostle Paul.⁷ This discourse on the Mount of Olives is *for* our learning; but it is not addressed *to* us. The Church of the Body and Christ's return to gather it were not the subject of Jesus' teaching here, for they were revealed later in the Church Epistles. Not realizing this fact has caused great confusion in the Christian church. Portions of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation give further details on what Jesus was expounding.

By the time Jesus became involved in this discourse with these four men, it was probably afternoon. When

6. This discourse is recorded in Luke 21:7-38, Mark 13:3-37, and Matthew 24:3-25:46.

7. Victor Paul Wierwille, "The Church: The Great Mystery Revealed," *God's Magnified Word* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1977), pp. 171-211.

Jesus finished telling his disciples about the future events relating to Israel, he told them of his imminent death, and the method by which he would die.

Matthew 26:1 and 2:

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* [omit the italicized words] the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

The italicized words are inaccurate additions by the translators and should be deleted. "After two days" means "after two days have passed." Since he was speaking very late on the eleventh, the "two days" must have been Monday the twelfth and Tuesday the thirteenth. That correctly places the Passover after these days on the fourteenth. Jesus knew his death was imminent and would take place sometime after Passover began on the fourteenth, though he did not yet know the exact hour. The specifics of Jesus' death become important later.

So Jesus told his disciples of his impending crucifixion. After witnessing his powerful deeds and the miracles of the past few days, to think of their bold and powerful lord dying such a demeaning death must have overwhelmed his followers. To the apostles, Jesus' statement must have seemed unbelievable, puzzling. But God's adversary, Satan, was using the religious leaders as they conspired together to capture and kill Jesus.

Matthew 26:3-5:

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty [seize by guile] , and kill *him*.

But they said, Not on the feast *day* [omit “day”], lest there be an uproar among the people.

Imagine the fury of the priests, scribes, and elders after Jesus had rebuked them before the people earlier in the day. Now these leaders gathered to consider ways of killing him. It is interesting that God’s Word shows Jesus having this knowledge revealed to him before the religious leaders even began their scheming. God always has His people a step ahead of the Adversary. The priests, scribes, and elders wanted Jesus Christ dead before the fifteenth, the day of holy convocation, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They feared the reaction of the people if they were to have Jesus killed during the Feast. A record of this identical situation is found in Mark 14.

Mark 14:1 and 2:

After two days was *the feast of the* passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

But they said, Not on [during] the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

Once again, the italicized words must be omitted. The word “of” preceding “unleavened bread” should be “the,” Mark 14:1 reads, “After two days was the passover and the unleavened bread. . . .” The known events of the eleventh of Nisan conclude with the conspiracy of the religious leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TWELFTH OF NISAN

As the twelfth of Nisan was beginning at sunset on our Sunday, Jesus returned from the Mount of Olives to Bethany to eat supper at the house of Simon the leper. This supper is recorded in Matthew 26:6-13, and Mark 14:3-9.

The Word of God says very little about Simon as an individual. Even though Jesus had previously healed him of his leprosy, the epithet “leper” still lingered with his name: “Simon the leper.” Lepers were considered cursed and defiled in the East, and this stigma followed Simon even after his healing. In this account of the evening supper beginning the twelfth of Nisan, we find Jesus dining at the house of this man who was not well respected by society. Jesus, as always, was a humble man who wanted to be where he could meet needs and fellowship with close disciples.

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11 Jerusalem at Temple Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	12 Preparation of room for the Passover Matt. 26:6-19 Mark 14:3-36 Luke 22:3-13	13
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

1. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8 6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	9 1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	10 Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

The first recorded supper of Jesus' last week was on our Thursday evening, six days before Passover, according to John 12:1-11. The second recorded supper was this one at Simon's on our Sunday evening, three days later. Once again the events are similar but not identical. We will study the record in Matthew 26.

Matthew 26:6-13:

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box [Estrangelo Aramaic says "vase"] of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*.

But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

For this ointment [Estrangelo Aramaic: *mshka*] might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

In contrast to the supper of John 12, the woman here is unnamed. In John 12, only Judas had complained

that the precious ointment was wasted. Now, three days later "his disciples" (plural) were upset. Perhaps Judas had influenced them. They had either forgotten or ignored the reproof that Jesus had given Judas as recorded in John 12.

The ointment was kept in a sealed alabaster container. The disciples' complaint was that the costly ointment which the woman poured on Jesus' head could have been sold and the money from it given to the poor. Since such ointment could be used for many purposes, among which was the anointing of corpses for burial, Jesus related this anointing with his burial because he knew that his death and burial were at hand. What love he showed in defending the woman while all the disciples criticized her.

Notice that in this anointing, the unnamed woman anointed his head, whereas in John 12 Mary had anointed his feet. On this occasion the woman treated Jesus as a king being anointed. She brought a small tapering vase of alabaster full of *mshka*, ointment, and anointed his head with it. The Aramaic word *mshka* comes from the same root as *mshika*, from which we derive the English word "Messiah" meaning "the Anointed One."²

Jesus, after explaining the importance of the woman's actions, made the statement that her act would be remembered wherever God's Word is held forth. Think

2. Kings and priests were anointed on the head. See Exodus 29:4-7, Psalms 133:2, I Samuel 10:1, 15:1. Jesus Christ was both a king and a priest to Israel (Matthew 21:5, John 1:49, Hebrews 5:5-10, 7:14-24).

how joyful Jesus' statement must have made her feel. Little did she know that God's Son would hold her act of love in such great esteem.

Matthew 26:7 says this anointing took place "as he sat *at meat*." In Eastern culture, meals were eaten with the diners sitting cross-legged upon the floor, sometimes leaning on pillows and cushions. A low table or cloth would be set before them with the food upon it.

Twice Jesus had been anointed with oil, once on his feet and once on his head—a complete anointing for a complete savior, from head to foot. The account in John 12 of the anointing of Jesus' feet emphasizes service to Jesus as the lord. In Matthew 26 and Mark 14, Christ's kingship as the Anointed One, the Christ, is stressed. Yet, the woman who did the final anointing was never named. Who she was is not emphasized here, but the love she manifested is worthy of being memorialized forever. What a remarkable truth from God's wonderful Word.

Luke 21:37 and 38:

And in the day time [Greek says "daytimes," plural] he was teaching in the temple; and at night [Greek says "nighttimes," again plural] he went out, and abode in the mount [Bethany was on the east side of the Mount of Olives] that is called *the mount* of Olives.

And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

These two verses from Luke 21 are a parenthetical statement which summarize his customary actions

during the final days before his crucifixion. In the context of Luke, Jesus had just finished his discourse in the Temple and on the Mount of Olives on Sunday, the eleventh. Luke does not record the supper at Simon's house in Bethany.

On Sunday evening beginning the twelfth of Nisan, after eating supper at Simon's, Judas Iscariot left the group. He went to the chief priests to collaborate with them for the capture of Jesus.

Luke 22:1-3:

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

This clearly states that Judas acted under the influence of Satan, According to Matthew 26 and Mark 14, Judas left sometime after the supper at Simon's, our Sunday night.

Judas, having seen his argument against wastefulness reproved a second time, allowed his pride to turn him against Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus' actions simply did not line up with what he had expected in the Messiah. Because of impulsive emotions, Judas left to make arrangements to betray Jesus soon after Simon's supper. With resentment at Jesus' reproof of him, Judas tried to

force Jesus' hand. Second-guessing Jesus' actions and intentions, Judas left to secretly arrange a direct confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Angry, frustrated, desperate, and uncertain, Judas left to betray the Son of God. It was a time of great personal confusion, anger, and distress for Judas. His internal confusion manifested itself in his actions. He had allowed Satan to manipulate his mind and life into this precarious dilemma.

From Simon's house in Bethany, Judas went to the palace of the high priest where the religious leaders were planning their capture of Jesus. They had been making their plans ever since the discourse in the Temple that afternoon.³

Luke 22:4-6:

And he [Judas] went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Here, at the beginning of the twelfth of Nisan, Judas made his decision to betray Jesus. Verse 5 says the chief

3. Matthew 26:1-5: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*. But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people."

priests and captains were glad when Judas conspired with them. They had been frantically trying to frame Jesus and condemn him to death ever since he had stirred up the people by the raising of Lazarus from the dead. But day after day they were disarmed as Jesus boldly challenged them and frustrated their efforts with flawless wisdom and timing. Finally, when Jesus had rebuked and embarrassed them so in the Temple with piercing words in front of a multitude of people, their anger knew no bounds. They understood that time was of essence if they were to arrest and execute Jesus before the Feast. Opportunely, Judas arrived at the palace of the high priest and offered the conspirators a means by which to implement their plans. One of Jesus' own apostles was volunteering to begin the sequence of actions for them. It is no wonder that the chief priests were "glad." This record is also found in Mark 14 and Matthew 26.

Mark 14:10 and 11:

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Matthew 26: 14-16:

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

The word “covenanted” here in Matthew 26:15 literally means that the men placed the silver for Judas on the balance to be weighed, which act indicated that they were standing together in their plans to capture Jesus. Judas, as treasurer of the apostles, was probably considered a capable businessman. Yet he settled with Jesus’ religious enemies for a mere thirty pieces of silver. In the Old Testament, according to Exodus 21:32, thirty pieces of silver was the fine to be paid when a man’s ox gored another man’s servant. It recompensed the injury to that servant. Only thirty pieces of silver, the lowest price of a slave, was the price paid for the betrayal of the savior of the world.

Did Judas fully realize what would be the consequences of his act? Was he misled by the priests? It is interesting to note that after the arrest, when the chief priests’ and elders’ intent to kill Jesus became clear to him, Judas deeply regretted the consequences of his betrayal of Jesus.⁴ Perhaps Judas originally thought that Jesus

4. Matthew 27:1-5: “when the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, what is *that* to us? see thou *to that*. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

would be arrested and then cleared. More likely he wanted to force Jesus to miraculously overthrow the power structure and institute his own kingdom. Whatever his motives and intentions, Judas allowed himself to be influenced by Satan and possessed as a result of the great pride in his heart and he paid dearly for it.

The thirty pieces of silver that were paid Judas were taken from the Temple treasury by the religious leaders. The treasury monies came from the tithes of the people. Among other things, money from this treasury was to be used in the purchase of sacrifices and offerings. Ironically, the ‘priests purchased Israel’s ultimate sacrifice—Jesus Christ the Passover lamb—with thirty pieces of silver given by the people.

The twelfth of Nisan developed the quickening pace leading to Calvary on the fourteenth. Around sunset beginning the twelfth, Jesus ate supper at Simon the leper’s. He reproved his disciples for their objections to his anointing by the unnamed woman. Then Judas left Simon’s house and met with the religious leaders to plan the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. The next recorded event is also on the twelfth of Nisan, sometime Monday morning or afternoon. Jesus was outside Jerusalem when he gave instructions to Peter and John.

Luke 22:7-13:

Then came the day [time] of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

And he [Jesus] sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

His instruction concerning “when ye are entered into the city” indicates that Jesus was outside Jerusalem. More than likely he was in Bethany which was where he had consistently gone to eat and abide with friends and disciples.

In verse 7 of Luke 22 the word “day” is *yoma* in Aramaic and in this context must be translated “time.” The Greek word *hēmera* used here can also be translated “time,” meaning a period of time, not a single day.⁵

5. Though the normal usage for these words *yoma* and *hēmera* is in reference to a literal day, it is also used to refer to a general period of time. See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, trans. and eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 345-347; also Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 190. Examples of this can be seen in John 8:56, Acts 8:1, Romans 10:21, and II Peter 3:10. This is the figure of speech *synecdoche* in which the part is put for the whole. Here the word “day” is put for a longer, more indefinite period of time. See E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used In the Bible* (1898; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), pp. 652-653.

It was the *time* of unleavened bread when all the preparations were being made for the seven-day Feast. The lamb was never killed on the day of unleavened bread, as this verse implies in the King James Version. It would be killed on the fourteenth during the afternoon, before the Feast ever began. Also, it was a seven-day feast, not a one-day feast as this verse implies when read in the King James Version. These facts should have caught our attention immediately.

A great key to understanding this verse 7 of Luke 22 is comprehending the word “killed.” “Killed” is the Greek word *thuō* which basically means “to sacrifice.” *Thuō* is different from other words which are also translated “to kill.” It is more than the actual slaying of the animal. It includes all the preparation leading up to the slaying. The Passover lamb was being prepared from the time it was selected on the tenth of Nisan. The twelfth of Nisan, the day we are presently studying, is during the time, preparation time, of unleavened bread. Verse 7 should read, “Then came the time of unleavened bread when the Passover must be sacrificed.” This verse does not state that verses 7 through 13 occur on the fourteenth of Nisan or during the seven-day Feast. Rather, it is a general reference to time indicating that the Passover sacrifice and the Feast are near. It was the time for arrangements and preparations to be made for the slaying and eating of the lamb. The actions recorded in the following verses further substantiate this. Misunderstanding this scripture has caused tre-

mendous confusion among those trying to fit the Gospel records of the week before the crucifixion.

Luke 22:8:

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

The word “prepare” is *hetoimazō* and means to “make ready” or “prepare in advance.” This is further proof that the time of these actions is during the preparation stage of the Feast. Jesus was making arrangements to eat the Passover meal. According to Matthew 26:2, Jesus already knew that he would be betrayed and crucified around Passover time. However, he did not yet know the exact time of his death. He was not yet certain whether or not he would live to eat the Passover meal. If he had been God, he would have known this and would never have made arrangements for it. But not having complete knowledge, Jesus desired to eat the Passover with his disciples before his death if at all possible. Continuing faithfully to fulfill the Old Testament law and wishing to be with his loved ones to the end, Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to secure and prepare a room for the meal to be eaten three nights later on the fifteenth.

Luke 22:9 and 10:

And they [Peter and John] said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher [Estrangelo

Aramaic: *grba*, a goatskin] of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

By divine revelation, Jesus Christ described how Peter and John would find a room for the Passover meal and told them what to do and say. The word “pitcher” is actually “goatskin” in Aramaic. It would be a humiliation and disgrace for a man in Biblical culture to carry a clay pitcher of water, for that was traditionally women’s work. But for a male to carry water in a goatskin on his back was perfectly acceptable. So Peter and John followed this man with a goatskin water bag into a house and then met the goodman of that house. The word “goodman” means “master.” With the master they made arrangements for the room.

Luke 22:11-13:

[Jesus is speaking] And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall [might] eat the passover with my disciples?

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

The word for “make ready” is once again *hetoimazō*. This guestchamber would be for short-term use. It was a place where privacy was available and a special meal like the Passover could be conveniently eaten. The “good-

man” would have already had his guest chamber prepared in a general way for guests. However, the disciples had to prepare it specifically for the Passover meal. This account is also found in Matthew 26 and Mark 14.

Matthew 26:17-19:

Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread [omit the italicized words; the passage reads “the first of the unleavened bread” meaning, the preparation period] the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

And he said, Go into the city to such a man [the goodman of the house], and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will [“I desire to” is the text] keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

Mark 14:12-16:

And the first day [again “first day” is the “first time,” referring to the first part of the Feast which is the preparation period] of unleavened bread, when they killed [the Greek word is *thuō*, which includes the preparation of the sacrifice for killing; this passage is a general reference to time indicating Passover is near] the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher [Estrangelo Aramaic: *mana*, meaning “vessel”] of water: follow him.

And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I

shall eat [“might eat” is the text] the Passover with my disciples?

And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Peter and John secured and began to prepare this guestchamber on our Monday, the twelfth of Nisan. The Passover that Jesus desired to eat in the guestchamber would not be until the first part of the fifteenth, after sunset on our Wednesday evening. Jerusalem was very crowded at the Feast time so arrangements would have to be made at least a few days ahead of time in order to find an adequate place and prepare it for this special occasion. The crowds were already swelling the city so that it took Jesus’ specific instructions to find an available place. With great detail and accuracy, Jesus told Peter and John when and how to make provisions. They dutifully obeyed.

Over and over again, Jesus expressed his desire to eat this Passover with his disciples before his suffering. Therefore, he saw to it that the necessary arrangements were made for what seemingly could have been his last meal. However, this intention of Jesus did not materialize. Between the time Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to prepare the guestchamber and the time he ate supper that very same night, Jesus learned by revelation

exactly when he would die. He knew then that he would not be at that Passover meal after all. Instead, his last supper would be that night, on our Monday, which was the beginning of the thirteenth of Nisan. On that day, the thirteenth of Nisan, began to unfold the most harrowing hours of human experience.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THIRTEENTH OF NISAN: SUNSET TO SUNRISE

The Christian world would rid itself of much confusion if it would return to the simple accuracy of God's Word rather than retaining the teachings of tradition. For example, Christians have thought that the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples was also the Passover meal. Yet the Word of God clearly teaches that Jesus himself died as the Passover lamb on the fourteenth of Nisan, before the Passover meal would have been eaten on the fifteenth. He could not possibly have eaten the Passover that year. However, even though the last supper eaten by Jesus was *not* the Passover meal, it was an important Occasion and we want to study it carefully.

Matthew 26:20 and 21:

Now when the even [Monday evening, around sunset beginning the *new* day of the thirteenth of Nisan} was come, he [Jesus] sat down with the twelve.

And as they did eat . . .

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	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11 Jerusalem at Temple Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	12 Preparation of room for the Passover Matt. 26:6-19 Mark 14:3-36 Luke 22:3-13	13 Trial & Torture Matt. 26:20-31a Mark 14:17-15:20a Luke 22:14-23:25 John 13:1-19:16a
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

1. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8 6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	9 1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	10 Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

This evening meal occurred around sunset on Monday, ending the twelfth of Nisan and beginning the thirteenth. People have mistakenly called this meal Passover because the preceding scriptures tell of Peter and John's preparation of a room in Jerusalem for the Passover. It has been wrongly assumed from this that the next meal recorded was the Passover.

When Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the room, he himself was outside the city. The Word of God does not say that he afterward went into the city to eat this last supper there. One can more logically assume that Jesus' last supper was eaten in Bethany because every record prior to this indicates Jesus was in Bethany in the evening to dine and lodge. This would also certainly be regarded by the believers as a safer place than Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the Word of God explicitly states in Matthew 26:20 that he *sat down* with the twelve to eat. Exodus 12:11 commands that the Passover meal was to be eaten with the loins girded, feet shod, and staff in hand. This indicates that they were to eat standing and that they were to be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. Nowhere does God in His Word instruct His people to make the change from standing to sitting.

The meal for which Peter and John had made preparations in Matthew 26:17-19 was the Passover. However, it would not be eaten until the fifteenth. The meal in Matthew 26:20 and 21 is recorded next in sequence simply because it came next chronologically. This meal was eaten on the evening ending the twelfth and

beginning the thirteenth of Nisan, around forty-eight hours before the Passover meal. Look at John's record of this last supper.

John 13:1 and 2:

Now before the feast of the passover [the two oldest Aramaic manuscripts read, "Before the unleavened bread"], when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And supper being ended...

The last supper occurred before the Feast, and thus before the Passover meal. Again, we clearly see this last supper was not the Passover meal. It was simply Jesus' last meal before his crucifixion. The "his own" toward the end of verse 1 included those of Israel to whom God had sent Jesus as a minister.

John 13:1 says that Jesus now "knew that his hour was come." This is the first time God's Word indicates that Jesus knew the exact hour of his death. Before, he had only known he would die around Passover time, and so he arranged to eat the Passover meal in accordance with the law. Now, on the evening that ended the twelfth and began the thirteenth, Jesus had knowledge from God that he would die before the Passover meal.²

In continuing our study of the last supper, we need to study Mark 14.

2. We should note here that the events and teaching of John 12:20-50 occurred sometime between the first entry on Friday the ninth and this last supper on our Monday evening, the beginning of the thirteenth.

Mark 14:17:

And in the evening he [Jesus] cometh with the twelve.

Where did they come to that evening? Very simply, they came to the location where they would eat supper. Was it in Bethany? Was it in Jerusalem? Did Jesus and the twelve come to another's home to eat with the other disciples? God's Word does not say and no amount of guesswork will give us a conclusive answer. Mark 14:17 says he came with the twelve. Nowhere does it exclude the possibility of others being present at the meal. There may have been more people dining with Jesus than his twelve apostles.

Luke 22:14-16:

And when the hour [the hour supper was to begin] was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

In verse 15 the words "with desire I have desired" are the figure of speech *polyptoton* meaning the same root word is used with different inflections or forms. By this figure of speech Jesus emphasized the great desire he had to eat the Passover with his disciples. The phrase "I have desired" is in the Greek aorist tense indicating a one-time action in the past. It means "at one time I did

desire." "This passover" refers to the approaching Passover meal two days hence. Jesus was not referring to the meal he was then eating, but to the impending Passover meal on the fifteenth of Nisan. In essence, Jesus was saying that at one time he desired with a great desire to eat the imminent Passover meal with them. However, he would suffer and die before that meal and therefore would not eat of it "until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," a time which is still future. That is the simple, minute accuracy of this passage. Luke 22 continues to unfold the events of the last supper.

Luke 22:17 and 18:

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves:

For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Jesus was making it clear that this would be his last meal before his death. Think of the wonder and concern this must have caused the apostles. They had begun the meal thinking it would be an ordinary supper, like the others they had had that week. They were anticipating more of the same, since preparations had already been made for eating the Passover together two days hence. The thought had not entered their minds that this would be their last meal with the Master.

Mark 14:18-21:

And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

And they began to be sorrowful [sad and uneasy] ,and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another *said, Is it I?*

And he answered and said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Jesus told them quite plainly that “one of the twelve” would betray him. Why would Jesus point out that the betrayer would be “one of the twelve” if only the twelve were eating with him? This is one indication that there may have been others present besides the twelve apostles.

The statement of betrayal so stirred up those present that they immediately began inquiring among themselves with sadness and uncertainty. Each one began wondering if he himself would be the betrayer.

Jesus responded that the betrayer was one of the twelve dipping with him in the dish. In the East, meals were not eaten with utensils such as forks and spoons. Instead they used flat sheets of thin pliable bread. A piece of this bread was torn off, wrapped around a piece of food, and dipped into a common dish. Since all of those eating would be doing this, Jesus did not single out any one person by this statement. However, according to Eastern thinking a person had an unbreakable bond of friendship and commitment to anyone with whom he ate, especially if the food was salted, as it

usually was. So while an Easterner would gladly serve a meal to any of his guests, he would only eat with those he trusted, such as family and intimate friends.³ That is the significance of Eastern hospitality when people eat with one another. For someone to betray a person with whom he has eaten is unforgivable to the true Eastern way of thinking. That was the deeper implication of what Jesus was saying when he pointed out that his betrayer was dipping his food in the same dish with Jesus; they were at present eating together. In the Gospel of Matthew we see the reaction of Judas Iscariot to this statement.

Matthew 26:25:

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Judas now knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus knew he would be the betrayer. There is no indication whether or not any of the others present heard Jesus' reply to Judas. All of this happened as they were eating and obviously in general commotion as each clamored to ask, “Is it I?” “Is it I?”

Sometime later during the course of the meal Jesus performed another act of great significance.

3. Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” This eating together shows the closeness of the relationship.

Matthew 26:26:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

It is significant that the Greek word for “bread” is *artos*. In the New Testament, *artos* is never used of the unleavened bread that was required for Passover and for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Greek word invariably used for that “unleavened bread” is *azumos*. In each Gospel *artos* is the word used regarding the bread eaten at the last supper. Since only unleavened bread was to be eaten with the Passover, this is further evidence that this last supper was not the Passover meal.⁴

Sometime after this memorial of bread was instituted, the memorial of the cup was given.

Matthew 26:27-29:

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.

Again Jesus stated that he would not again drink of this fruit of the vine before his death. But he assured

4. In all the records of the last supper, there is no mention of the Passover lamb’s being eaten, surely reference to this would not have been omitted if this had been the Passover meal.

them he would one day “drink it new” with them in his Father’s Kingdom.

Here at this last supper, Jesus instituted a memorial for his approaching death. It is a memorial to be recognized and one that may be participated in by all born-again believers until he returns. It is also a symbol of the making of a new covenant with Israel, a covenant involving the shedding of blood. During the Church Age that new covenant is held in abeyance. It will again be in effect when Israel is reestablished as stated in the Book of Revelation, for then Jesus Christ will again be present to reign over Israel in the Kingdom of Heaven. The prophecy of this new covenant can be found in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah 31:31-34:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,

saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The new covenant does not apply directly to those of us in the Church of the Body. It was for Israel. However, in a very real and practical sense, we do enjoy the benefits of that covenant and all the accomplishments of Christ which made the second covenant possible. That is why we observe communion in remembrance of these things. When Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah, that new covenant he established was withdrawn and is being held in abeyance. But in its place God made something much greater available to both Israel and the Gentiles, namely, the great Mystery, that the Gentiles are fellowheirs and of the same Body, each individual believer having Christ in him. Only a small segment of Israel ever came to the point of accepting this opportunity to appropriate the greatness of the Mystery which God brought about.⁵

When we during the Age of Grace observe the memorial called “holy communion,” we declare that we remember the many blessings Jesus Christ made available by his death. By revelation he instituted this memorial before his suffering and death. What a loving act by our wonderful savior!

“This is my body” in Matthew 26:26 could not be literal. We do not literally eat Jesus Christ’s body. Centuries of argumentation could have been avoided if

5. Wierwille, “The Church: The Great Mystery Revealed,” *God’s Magnified Word*, pp. 171-211.

people had recognized a very simple figure of speech called metaphor. A metaphor is stronger than a simile which simply compares two things by using the words “like” or “as.” In a metaphor the verb “is” can be replaced by the word “represents.” Jesus was emphatically saying, “This bread represents my body.” Likewise, the wine in the cup represented his blood. The Apostle Paul spoke of this memorial in I Corinthians 11.

I Corinthians 11:23-30:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament [*diathēkē*, covenant] in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [judgment] to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.

For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Notice that this bread and wine are to be taken “in remembrance.” That is why it is a memorial rather than a sacrament (which is a rite with a mysterious meaning). We are to give proper remembrance of Jesus Christ and the accomplishments of his death. He died as Israel’s last and true Passover lamb. Because he was the ultimate Passover lamb, there is no need for any more Passover sacrifices or meals because Jesus Christ was the final sacrifice. The Passover meal has been replaced with holy communion, which is the memorial of Jesus Christ’s death. The cup of wine represents the blood he shed to atone for sins. The bread represents his body. The accomplishments of his bodily sufferings bring us physical deliverance. Not discerning the lord’s body has caused many Christians to become weak, sickly, and even die. They have not claimed the physical health Jesus Christ made available. Whereas Passover memorialized the children of Israel’s deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, holy communion memorializes the believers’ deliverance from the bondage of sin and its consequences. Communion is the only memorial God has given whereby Christians remember the atonement of His Son. And it is a memorial that, when done properly, brings immediate benefits.⁶

6. Victor Paul Wierwille, “The Broken Body and the shed Blood,” *The Bible Tells Me So* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1971), pp. 75-92.

After the memorial was instituted, several events took place which we will look into later. One of these events was a “praise” or the singing of a hymn.⁷ Up to this point, we have observed in a basically chronological fashion the records of the last supper as recorded in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22. This was possible because each of these three Gospels records several details common to them all. However, the Gospel of John records this same meal from a totally different perspective and with many other details. With the possible exception of the proclamation that a betrayer was in their midst,⁸ none of the details of the event recorded in John can be found in the other three Gospels. The Gospel of John relates many unique and significant truths of what happened at the last supper.

John 13:2 and 3:

And supper being ended [the text reads “taking place” or “beginning to take place”], the devil [“Satan,” in Aramaic] having now [already] put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray him;

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.

7. Matthew 26:30: “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”

Mark 14:26: “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”

8. John 13:21-25: ‘When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?’

This knowledge of his superior calling from God contrasts vividly with the humbling service Jesus was about to perform. Usually only a slave would do what he was about to do, and only the lowest class of slave at that.

John 13:4 and 5:

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

In the East the lowliest bonds slave, the son of a bonds slave, was responsible to wash the feet of his master's family or of guests when they arrived at the house. Anytime a guest entered a house, whether it was once or fifty times a day, this procedure took place.

Occasionally when a person of high rank visited another's home, only the head of the house was allowed to wash his guest's feet, and then he, the head of the house, would serve his guest at the table. This was a very high compliment for a man to give a guest. Jesus did this humble task and thereby set an example of love, service, and humility.

The "garments" of verse 4 refer to Jesus' outer cloak. This would have left him wearing his tunic. The towel was a linen cloth. Jesus would, as a servant, tie this about his waist and use the ends of it for wiping the

disciples' feet. The verb "wash" is the Greek word *níptō*, meaning "to wash one part of the body."

The extraordinary point here is how Jesus in washing his disciples' feet totally broke with custom to show the extent of the love of God they were to have in their lives. These were lowly men, but Jesus treated them like royalty. His disciples were completely taken by surprise because they knew from their social status that they did not deserve such treatment, especially from their lord.

John 13:6-8:

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Peter, who loved and respected Jesus, could not accept this act of humility from his master. Jesus reproved his beloved friend and follower. If he, Jesus, did not wash Peter's feet, then Peter could not share in Jesus' work.

John 13:9 and 10:

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all [not all present are clean].

After Jesus explained the washing, Peter wanted to be completely washed, But Jesus said that he who is bathed or washed all over needs only to wash his feet, and is otherwise clean. The Greek word for “clean” is *katharos*, meaning “free from impurity in every way.” In the East, people would get dirty feet from wearing only sandals when walking on the dusty roads. Yet the rest of the body would remain clean, That is why it was customary to wash the feet. From this simple truth Jesus then showed them that, as a group, they were basically free from impurity, but not all of them were. The next verse explains this.

John 13:11:

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Judas was not pure. The rest of the disciples were.

John 13:12:

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Jesus was a teacher to the end, Having performed the action, he explained it so clearly that all could learn from it.

John 13:13-16:

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant [Greek: *doulos*, bonds slave] is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

This was one of Jesus' greatest teachings on serving. Jesus was not saying that his followers should literally always be ready to wash the feet of fellow believers. He was teaching a principle, saying that in attitude of heart his followers should be like bondslaves. *Doulos*, here translated “servant,” is used of a dedicated, trusted servant. When the analogy is transferred to Christian service, it expresses the highest devotion of one who is bound by love. That is what Jesus' example meant. Christians should devotedly help each other keep their walks pure before God. They should be willing to do the lowliest task in order to bless each other.

John 13:17 and 18:

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Jesus quoted the Old Testament, namely Psalms 41:9, in declaring that there was a betrayer among them, one

who would betray him even though they had eaten together.

John 13:19-23:

Now I tell you before it [his betrayal] come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Theologians, artists, and tradition have proclaimed that this disciple "whom Jesus loved" was the Apostle John. As so often happens, people have assumed this to be correct and have made a doctrine out of it. We cannot do that and stand approved before God. The Word of God never tells us who this disciple was. The argument can more convincingly be made that this disciple was Lazarus. Although Jesus surely loved John, never does God's Word emphatically declare his love for John as an individual. However, the Word does state this of Lazarus.

John 11:5:

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Besides this, twice John 11 records the deep human love of intimate friendship Jesus had with Lazarus.

John 11:3 and 11:

. . . he [Lazarus] whom thou lovest is sick.

. . . Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. . . .

This last supper may well have been eaten at the house of Lazarus. Never does God's Word state that the disciple "whom Jesus loved" was an apostle; in fact, it refers to him as a "disciple." A person can be a disciple without being an apostle. Surely after the emotion-filled events of John 11 and 12, Lazarus was one of Jesus' closest disciples. We should also realize that the thirteenth chapter of John speaks over and over of disciples as being present. As previously noted, God's Word does not limit the attendance at this meal exclusively to the twelve apostles. Conjecture aside, the identity of the disciple "whom Jesus loved" is unspecified.

John 13:23:

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

To better understand this scene, we must first understand the customs in Biblical times. This has seldom

been pictured accurately in art or in the minds of Western readers. Those dining were not sitting on wooden chairs around a high table, as we eat in the Western culture and as has been popularly pictured. Nor would they have been lying horizontally on their sides with their heads toward the middle and their bodies stretched upon raised beds (forming what was called a *triclinium*). This use of a *triclinium* was actually only a practice of the wealthy class, especially those who had been greatly influenced by the gentile Roman culture. Part of the reason for the popularity of this teaching has been the influence of those who felt this last supper was the Passover meal and, therefore, a special meal which might call for such special furniture.

Jesus and his disciples sat in the posture of the common Easterners when eating an everyday meal. They would have sat cross-legged upon the floor, perhaps leaning back at times against a pillow or cushion. The table in front of them would consist simply of a cloth upon the floor or a wooden table only slightly elevated.

God's Word states that the disciple whom Jesus loved was "leaning on Jesus' bosom." An Easterner may lean his head upon his master's breast as an act of deep concern, love, and intimate friendship. It also shows that he is putting himself completely in the trust, care, and comfort of his master, as a son would be in the care

of a father.⁹ The disciple leaning on Jesus' bosom must have been sitting next to Jesus during the meal. Because this disciple was so near Jesus, Simon Peter signaled for him to get information from Jesus.

John 13:24-26:

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him [the disciple], that he should ask [ask Jesus] who it should be of whom he spoke.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

Jesus identified the betrayer to his beloved disciple. With this disciple so close it is possible that he was the only one who heard it and therefore knew his identity. Judging from the context, if the others did hear it, they failed to comprehend. Time and again throughout the Gospels Jesus endeavored to make things plain to them that they still did not really grasp.

A sop, such as the one Jesus gave to Judas, was normally a piece of flat, round, pliable bread like an Indian *chapatti*, wrapped around a morsel of food. This would then be dipped by the host into the common dish and given to the guest to whom he wanted to show

9. Further insight on their posture at the last supper can be gained by reading Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), pp. 222-230; also Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), pp. 56.57. The significance of a person's being upon or in one's bosom can be found in other places in God's Word, such as Numbers 11:12 and John 1:18. See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, p. 881.

his greatest love and esteem. In placing the sop to his guest's mouth for him to eat, the host would demonstrate to all present the love and honor he had for that guest. Knowing full well that Judas would be the betrayer, Jesus Christ gave to him the sop with full symbolic significance intended. Besides showing Judas honor and love, Jesus Christ gave him another chance to abandon his plans of betrayal by showing Judas how much he cared for him. With such deep kindness, Judas' heart could have softened. But instead, Judas had so hardened his heart that he shortly went to carry out his plans made earlier. What love and compassion Jesus had!

There are some interesting points we should recognize here about the situation at hand. The two most honored seats at the meal were those to the right and to the left of the Master. In one of those seats was the disciple "whom Jesus loved." This disciple knew that when Judas was given the sop, it meant that he (Judas) would be the traitor. Whether or not any of the others present heard the conversation we cannot definitely say, but we can be assured that if they did hear, they did not comprehend that Judas was to be the betrayer. Perhaps it was Jesus' giving Judas the sop which confused and blinded them to the stark reality that he had turned against the Master.

In order for Judas to receive the sop, he would have had to be sitting very close to Jesus. This makes it probable that he also sat next to Jesus, in one of the highest positions of honor at the meal. Being that close,

Judas could well have heard Jesus tell the disciple whom he loved, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*." The other Gospels record that when Jesus announced that a traitor was among them, that the apostles began wondering and asking Jesus about it. As stated in Matthew 26:25, Judas too asked Jesus, "Master, is it I?" Jesus responded affirmatively, "Thou hast said." If Judas were positioned immediately beside Jesus, it is possible that only he heard those words. These are details that make this last supper so intriguing and dramatic.

Jesus was treating this man who was about to betray him as a highly honored guest. It was at this time that Judas became activated by the host of evil thoughts that obsessed him.

John 13:27-30:

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

For some *of them* thought because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Either the disciples did not hear or else they did not understand Jesus' statement to Judas. They appeared to

be unaware of the spiritual things that were happening. When Jesus said, "That thou doest, do quickly," some of them thought that he had sent Judas to buy things for the impending feast (which is further evidence that this last supper was not the Passover meal). Others thought Jesus was sending him to give something to the needy. Since Judas was the treasurer these were logical deductions. Sometime, evidently before Judas left the supper as recorded in John 13:30, a short discourse occurred. That discourse is recorded in Luke 22.

Luke 22:21-23:

But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

Besides the betrayal subject, there is another topic of conversation recorded in Luke 22. Again, the exact time of its occurrence is unknown.

Luke 22:24-30:

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

And he [Jesus] said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The words "appoint" and "hath appointed" in verse 29 come from the Greek word *diatithēmi*. This word relates to settling the terms of a covenant. In context it is used regarding the settling of the new covenant with Israel which will be in effect in the future after Christ's return.

This discourse is especially notable because it underlines the principle of service which Jesus demonstrated by washing his disciples' feet. By this time it is possible that Judas had left. The others present were to participate in at least two Biblical administrations. As believers of Israel during the Gospels, they were a part of the Kingdom of Heaven; after Pentecost, they would be part of the Church of the Body. Sometime after the Church is gathered together and Israel is resurrected, these men will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

They will also have honored places at Jesus Christ's banquet table.

Christ drew a parallel between this last supper and a future supper which will occur after his second coming. At that future supper there will be no strife over who gets what position, because of the perfection of all. The example of service he gave them at the beginning of the meal will also be perfectly fulfilled by them: in love they will serve and rule and judge with their lord. In John 13 Jesus gave his followers a new commandment.

John 13:31-35:

Therefore, when [or "after"] he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The word "love" is the Aramaic word *koba* and the Greek word *agape*. This commandment was new in quality. Soon they would be able to love one another in a way that had never before been possible. They would

be able to love with the love of God emanating from the gift of holy spirit born within each believer. This love would not be conditional upon how they loved themselves. Nor was it natural love. Jesus was telling them to love each other with the spiritual love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation. This would be fully possible on the day of Pentecost, when they became born again by God's Spirit. This *agapē* love would be their mark of distinction: "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love [*agapē*] one to another."

After these words, there is another remarkable interchange of words between Jesus and the questioning Peter.

John 13:36:

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Jesus had said, "Where I'm going you cannot come." Peter thought at first that Jesus was just going for a walk. So he said, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "You cannot follow me where I'm going now, but later on you will follow me there." Of course, Jesus was referring to his death, with his ultimate hope of being raised from the dead and of being seated with God in the heavenlies. In reality Jesus was making a tremen-

10. Matthew 22:39: "... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

dous promise to Peter. However, Peter did not quite comprehend what Jesus was saying.

The response of Jesus to Peter's question as recorded in the Gospel of Luke is quite interesting. Remember that even though they had finished eating the last supper, they were still at the place where they had eaten.

Luke 22:31-33:

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

John 13:37:

Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

Jesus had to use emphatic language with Peter. But even this was not enough as Peter continued to insist he was ready to go to prison and die for him. Finally, Jesus forthrightly stated that Peter would not follow him, but indeed, Peter would deny him.

John 13:38:

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Luke 22:34:

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

This is the first prediction made by Jesus of Peter's denials. He prophesied of it while they were yet at the scene of the last supper. It was sometime after this first prediction that they began preparing to leave the place where they had eaten.

Luke 22:35-38:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword [dagger] ,let him sell his garment, and buy one.

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords ["daggers" would be more accurate] . And he said unto them, It is enough.

People often greatly emphasize the command in Matthew 10 in which Jesus charged the apostles to do without many of the things referred to above. At that time they lacked nothing because God supplied their needs. They had been moving quickly, with no extra baggage, in spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. But here in Luke the revelation is different

because the situation is different. The gospel and the king have been rejected by Israel as a whole. Now God's revelation was to take the extra supplies with them, even weaponry. It was nearing the time of the crucifixion.

Despite these preparations and Jesus' impending death, the disciples were not to become agitated. They were to have God's peace and the assurance of what Christ would do for them in the future. This is made clear in this final discourse at the location of the last supper. This discourse, occurring sometime after the first prediction of Peter's denial, is recorded in John 14.

John 14:1-31:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

What a teaching! Imagine the impact this must have had on the hearts of the disciples. Jesus Christ did everything possible to rid them of their fear and insecurity. Yet, they still had to recognize that the Adversary's hour of success was near and the time of the crucifixion was at hand. Perhaps it was at this time that they sang the hymn of praise recorded in the other Gospels.

Finally Jesus said, "Arise, let us go hence." It was at this point that they left the location of that remarkable last supper. Little did those present realize how well known this occasion would become.

Matthew 26:30:

And when they had sung an hymn ["praised" in Aramaic], they went out into the mount of Olives.

Mark 14:26:

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Luke 22:39:

And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

They sang a hymn of praise and left the location of the last supper. Each of these Gospels agree that upon leaving the last supper Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives. Earlier, in Mark 14:17 and Luke 22:14, we saw that Jesus came with the twelve "apostles" and sat down with them. Now Luke 22 specifically notes that his "disciples" followed Jesus when he left.

Once again, “his disciples” may have included more than the twelve apostles. It implies that Jesus and the twelve had come to dine with others and, upon leaving, some of the others followed. Their eventual destination was the Garden of Gethsemane, a secluded garden just outside Jerusalem. While walking from the house where the last supper was eaten to the garden, Jesus taught many principles and some interesting events occurred.

The parable of the true vine is recorded in John 15. Jesus taught the disciples about fellowship with God and with each other. He taught them the depth of love and service. He exhorted them to proclaim the gospel in the face of persecution. He told them that he must suffer, die, and depart, but that the holy spirit would be sent to comfort, exhort, and guide them. He taught them the power they would have in prayer.

Finally Jesus told them that the hour was coming when those to whom he was speaking would desert him and that only the Father would be with him. In John 16:33 he gave the reason he had taught them all these things: so that they could have peace in him. What a great savior he was, looking after the hearts of the people to the very end! Thus concludes the discourses of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John.

In John 17 is the record of a prayer Jesus Christ prayed after he and his disciples left the last supper and before they entered the Garden of Gethsemane. The courage of Jesus Christ, as well as his love and concern for his disciples and for his heavenly Father, are clearly

in evidence throughout the prayer. This prayer cannot be identical with his later prayers in the garden. This prayer is totally different in content (as far as what is recorded) and was prayed before entering the garden in John 18:1 and 2. The prayer of John 17 emphasizes the fact that Jesus Christ had given his disciples God’s Word, enabling them to walk with God as he had.

Before reaching the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus continued to try to help his disciples understand what to anticipate in the following hours and days. Matthew 26 gives the account of this.

Matthew 26:31-34:

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended [made to stumble] because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended [made to stumble] because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended [made to stumble].

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

This is the second prediction Jesus made of Peter’s denials. The first had been made at the last supper. Evidently this was the topic of discussion for much of the walk. Finally, Jesus very emphatically predicted Peter’s denials for the third time.

Mark 14:30:

And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

This is a different prediction from the one in Matthew 26:34 because the wording is different; this third prediction contains the word “twice.” A close study of the denials of Peter clearly demonstrates that Peter denied the lord six times. There were two separate cock-crowings with three denials before each.

Even from the time before they left the site of the last supper, the disciples, especially Peter, had continually insisted that they would never desert Jesus. In counter-ing this, Jesus twice told Peter that he would deny his master three times before the cock would crow. However, Peter persisted in saying that he would not. Finally Jesus unequivocally declared that Peter would deny him three times before the cock crowed twice.¹¹ Peter ultimately denied him a total of six times despite this final warning—three times before each cock-crowing. Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ final prediction was one of strenuous disagreement. The other disciples sided with Peter in refuting Jesus’ pronouncement.

Mark 14:31:

But he [Peter] spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

11. See Appendix 9, “Peter’s Denials.”

After all this, the apostles and Jesus arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane. This is recorded in every Gospel.

Matthew 26:36:

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Mark 14:32:

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Luke 22:40:

And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

John 18:1:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over [beyond] the brook Cedron [Kidron], where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

John 18:1 has caused many to assume that Jesus’ last supper was eaten in Jerusalem, because the Brook Kidron¹² runs between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, where the traditional site of the garden is placed. But there are several things which the Biblical student must realize in handling this statement about the disciples’ moving from the place of the last supper to the garden beyond the Brook Kidron.

12. Kidron is also spelled “Kedron” or “Cedron” in the Bible and other sources. The Kidron is actually a ravine which, in Biblical times, would flow with water at the end of winter. In fact, the word “brook” is “winter-flowing” in the Greek.

First, there is no reason why Jesus could not have eaten his last supper at Bethany, then walked around the Mount of Olives to the southern and eastern sides of Jerusalem for a final look with his apostles before the arrest. Being below the city, they would then start up that beautiful valley and finally walk across the Kidron to the garden. They could even have entered the city via any of its southern or eastern gates, walked past the Temple area together one last time, and then left by the east gate to cross the Kidron. God's Word does not record all of the events occurring as they walked from the place of the last supper to the garden. However, it does record much teaching, prayer, and conversation during this time. Certainly there was time for many actions that simply were not recorded.

In the second place, the present-day site of Gethsemane is only a traditional site. Eminent scholars have challenged its authenticity.¹³ In Bible times such gardens were scattered on the Mount of Olives and its surrounding area. Since the actual site of Gethsemane is not known, its exact position in relationship to the Brook Kidron and Jerusalem in Jesus' time is not known. Further, the statement in John that they went beyond the Brook Kidron to the garden does not necessitate that they crossed over the brook from the west side to the east. All of this information casts doubt on the

13. William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 634; Arther Penrhyn Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine* (New York: W.J. Middleton, 1877), p. 450; and J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Gethsemane," by D.H. Tongue.

arguments endeavoring to prove from John 18:1 that the last supper was in Jerusalem in the upper room.

It is the erroneous teaching that the last supper was the Passover meal that has caused the confusion, because the Passover would have been eaten in Jerusalem. Since the last supper was clearly not the Passover meal, however, there is no reason for assuming that the last supper was eaten in Jerusalem. It is more logical that it was eaten in Bethany, where Jesus had gone on prior evenings to fellowship and eat with friends and disciples.

Upon entering the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ and his disciples were about to spend their last minutes together. This was a time of intense prayer in the face of immense pressure.

Matthew 26:36-44:

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:¹⁴ nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

14. Biblically, the word "cup" is often used figuratively to indicate that one will partake of whatever the cup contains. Sometimes the cup is (figuratively) full of iniquity or the judgment and just retribution for iniquity (Psalms 11:6, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15,18, Ezekiel 23:33, Revelation 16:19, 17:4, 18:6). Here in Matthew 26:39, as in John 18:11, the cup represents the agonizing responsibility set before Jesus of taking the judgment for man's sins upon himself.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch [keep vigilant] with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

The Master had come to his most crucial hour before giving himself over to his enemies and yet his closest associates could not stay awake to watch with him. Peter, James, and John had been asked to stay awake and pray, yet the heaviness and anxiety of the situation had built up to the point of almost being unbearable. According to Luke 22:45, “He found them sleeping for sorrow.” The time of suffering was near, and Jesus was facing that time alone.

Three times Jesus went to God in prayer to establish God’s revelation. Why did he ask God three times, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me”? Jesus was not afraid. He was not doubtful of God’s promises. He simply began to fully recognize the excruciating suffering that was before him. There are many ways to die, and the type of death Jesus would endure was most

agonizing. If there were any other way for God’s plan of redemption to be carried out, Jesus asked that it be done.

Luke 22:43:

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

In the midst of prayer, God provided His Son with an angel to strengthen him. What a relationship Jesus Christ had with his Father. While God could not relieve Jesus of the responsibility of enduring the suffering and death of the cross, He could give him tremendous support.

Luke 22:44:

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This does not say that Jesus sweat blood. It simply describes his sweat as being like great drops of blood. Some believe that Jesus literally sweat blood.¹⁵ The use of the word “as” makes it clear that a figurative usage is intended, the figure of speech being simile. The word “blood” represents the life Jesus poured into this prayer. Hence this figure emphasizes the intensity with which Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed three times for another

15. Medically It is possible to literally sweat blood under certain conditions, although it is extremely rare. However, this verse is clearly a figurative expression, not literal. It is interesting that some Greek and Aramaic sources omit Luke 22:43 and 44.

way to accomplish his task; but these three times God's answer was established and complete. There was no other way than the course set before Jesus. So with the greatest denial of self and the greatest act of loving obedience in human history, Jesus Christ submitted his own will to the will and purposes of God. After these moments of agony and decision, Jesus returned to find his three disciples sleeping again.

Matthew 26:45:

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

But shortly after he told his disciples to rest here in verse 45, Jesus sensed a drastic change in the situation and roused them to action.

Matthew 26:46 and 47:

Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

The Gospel of Matthew says that the group that came for Jesus was an armed multitude. Further details are in the Gospel of John.

John 18:2 and 3:

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place [he was

well aware that they would be in that garden]: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

Judas then, having received a band [*speira* is the Greek word used of a cohort, which is a military term for a group of soldiers] *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

During crowded feast times, the Temple was normally guarded by an armed guard, a cohort consisting of four hundred to six hundred Roman soldiers.¹⁶ Their basic purpose was to maintain order among the multitudes at the Feast. There was also the regular Judean Temple guard composed of Levites. In addition, according to Luke 22:52, some chief priests and elders accompanied the group making the arrest. At this Feast the religious leaders were so intent on capturing Jesus that they solicited these Roman soldiers along with their own officers of the Temple guard to arrest Jesus. In order to get Roman help, the chief priest and other religious leaders needed only to depict Jesus as a dangerous leader of rebels. Imagine hundreds of soldiers carrying torches and weapons out of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane. Then, under the light of the full moon of the Passover season,¹⁷ these hundreds of soldiers and Temple guards are confronted by the object of their mission: one solitary man.

16. Technically, a cohort (600) was one tenth of a legion (6,000); however, in practice the figure varied from 400 to 600.

17. Since Nisan always began at the new moon, the moon would be full at mid-month.

John 18:4-6:

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Can you imagine one man courageously stepping out to meet hundreds of soldiers searching to arrest him? That is what Jesus did. Then, with complete presence of mind, already knowing the answer to his question, he simply asked, “Whom seek ye?” Next he admitted his identity with such calm straightforwardness that his questioners were totally overcome. Even though hundreds of soldiers were with them, their shock from Jesus’ action was so great that they stepped back and dropped to the ground.

John 18:7-9:

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gayest me have I lost none.

Jesus was master of the situation. He literally handed himself over to the soldiers. But he took care to protect

his disciples from arrest, because without Jesus’ intervention the soldiers most certainly would have taken them into custody as well.

Up to this point Judas remained merged within the ranks of the soldiers. In order to save face with the other apostles, Judas did not want to appear to be participating in the capture of their master. So by staying in the background and then greeting Jesus with a seemingly innocent kiss, Judas could feign that he had merely followed the captors when he realized the Master was in danger. While appearing to lovingly greet Jesus, Judas stepped forward and delivered a planned signal for the soldiers and leaders—this proved to be the kiss of death.

Matthew 26:48:

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Luke 22:47 and 48:

And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Matthew 26:49 and 50:

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? . . .

The juxtaposition of a kiss with betrayal is ironic, as a kiss is the usual greeting of an intimate friend. “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” This does not mean Jesus was ignorant of Judas’ intentions. The Aramaic reads, “My friend, for this [meaning, this greeting of a kiss] are you come to me?” Jesus Christ’s words expressed the irony of Judas’ action.

Luke 22:49 and 50:

When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off [cut; his ear was not completely severed so that it fell off] his right ear.

John 18:10:

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant [one of the Levitical Temple guard], and cut off [cut, not completely severed] his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

Matthew 26:50-54:

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off [cut, not completely severed] his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Impetuous Peter, so often impulsive in his actions, jumped to the defense of his master by partially cutting off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. That could have potentially set off an explosive and violent fray; however, Jesus Christ remained unflustered and in complete control of the situation. He made it unmistakably clear that the soldiers were going to take him away only because he chose to let them do so.¹⁸ He could have had twelve legions of angels to defend him if he chose, many more than there were soldiers in that band. But Jesus’ desire was to fulfill the Scriptures so he gave himself over to these men.

Luke 22:51:

And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far [just hold it for a moment]. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Jesus touched and healed the man’s ear which Peter had cut. Can you imagine what thoughts the soldiers and the religious leaders must have had when Jesus restored Malchus’ ear. They had surely never before arrested anyone like this. After this miracle in the midst of such tumult, Jesus wanted to know why the chief priests, the Temple captains, and the elders chose to arrest him as though he were a common criminal in hiding.

18. John 10:15 and 18: “. . . I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. . . .”

Luke 22:52 and 53:

Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no bands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Jesus said that this hour was not his, but rather his captors' hour *and* the hour of the power of darkness. The Adversary was having his time of command. After this statement, the soldiers arrested Jesus and began to take him away.

Matthew 26:56:

But this was done, that [with the result that] the scriptures of the prophets might be [were] fulfilled.¹⁹ Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

As Jesus had predicted, the disciples scattered from him, and "all the disciples forsook him." There were two individuals at the scene of the arrest whom we should specifically note as recorded in Mark 14.

Mark 14:51,52,54:

And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men [guards and soldiers] laid hold on him:

And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

19. See Appendix 7, "That It Might Be Fulfilled."

And Peter followed him [Jesus] afar off. . . .

The young man who escaped the soldiers is not named in God's Word, although the possibility of his being Lazarus certainly merits consideration. The Biblical usage of "naked" means that he had on only his tunic and girdle. The linen cloth indicates that the young man may have been wealthy, which could apply to Lazarus. As John 12:10 noted, the religious leaders wanted to arrest Lazarus as well as Jesus, and there is no indication that they pursued any of the other disciples present. The presence of this young man is another indication that others besides the twelve were present. While this young person was fleeing, Peter was following Jesus and his captors at a distance.

Before taking Jesus to Caiaphas, the guards and soldiers first took him to Annas, a former high priest.

John 18:12-14:

Then the band and the captain [a tribune; a top-level Roman commander] and officers [officers of the Levitical Temple guard] of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Annas himself had been the only high priest at one time. In the minds of most Judeans who knew the

Scriptures, he would be the high priest as long as he lived. However, by this point in time, the Romans had deposed Annas and appointed Caiaphas as high priest. Thus while Caiaphas was the official high priest in the eyes of the Romans, Annas remained the high priest in the eyes of Judaism.²⁰ That is how the Judeans had the unique situation of having two high priests at this time. Caiaphas had the most legal power, but Annas for many reasons actually carried the most influence in the religious community. Annas and Caiaphas, because of position and being father- and son-in-law, probably lived in the same palace.²¹

Annas, besides once having been the sole high priest, had also influenced the decisions as to who was to be chosen to succeed him in that position. No fewer than five of his sons, a son-in-law, and one of his grandsons filled the office of high priest at various times.²² Presently, at this time of Jesus' trial, Annas' son-in-law Caiaphas was the high priest. That is clearly stated here in John 18:13.

Annas was obviously as resolute as his son-in-law in seeking the death of Jesus. And with his experience in

20. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, rev. ed., 2 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 2:547.

21. This is especially true in the East where relatives often live together. Also, the first denial by Peter was while Jesus was before Annas and Peter was at a fire in the courtyard. In some of the other denials the situation was the same except that Jesus was before Caiaphas. There is no indication that Peter went to a different courtyard. Annas and Caiaphas probably lived in separate parts of the same palace. That is why they would share a common courtyard.

22. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:547.

handling difficult situations, he would be valuable both in dealing with Jesus and in formulating the charges against him.²³

Below is a brief, general outline summarizing the order of events and situations confronting Jesus beginning with his arrest on late Monday night and continuing to his death on Wednesday afternoon:

1. Arrested in garden late Monday night (Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:2-12)
2. Appeared before Annas late Monday night (John 18:13-23)
3. Appeared before Caiaphas and Sanhedrin in a "night trial" late Monday night and very early Tuesday morning (Matthew 26:57-75, Mark 14:53-72, Luke 22:54-65, John 18:24-27)
4. Appeared before Sanhedrin again for a "morning trial" around daybreak on Tuesday (Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1, Luke 22:66-71)

23. According to John 11:45-53, Caiaphas had been the one to suggest a death sentence for Jesus to the Sanhedrin. According to Walter M. Chandler, Annas had officially been deposed by the Romans for executing capital sentences without Roman consent. Annas seems to have had a more experienced, cunning approach than the hasty, abrupt Caiaphas. Walter M. Chandler, *The Trial of Jesus* (1908; illus. ed., 2 vols. in 1, Norcross, Ga.: Harrison Co., 1976), 1:118-119; also Frank Powell, *The Trial of Jesus Christ* (London: Paternoster Press, 1948), p. 27.

5. Appeared before Pilate early Tuesday morning, after daybreak (Matthew 27:2, Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1-6, John 18:28-38)
6. Appeared before Herod Tuesday morning (Luke 23:7-12)
7. Appeared before Pilate again later on Tuesday morning; during this trial appearance, Pilate appealed to the Judeans three separate times (Matthew 27:11-25, Mark 15:2-14, Luke 23:13-23, John 18:39-19:15)
8. Sentenced by Pilate around noon (John 19:14) on Tuesday (Matthew 27:26, Mark 15:15, Luke 23:24 and 25, John 19:16)
9. Tortured and mocked by soldiers in judgment hall (Matthew 27:26-31, Mark 15:15-20)
10. Led out for crucifixion on Wednesday morning (Matthew 27:32-34, Mark 15:20-23, Luke 23:26-32, John 19:16 and 17)
11. Hung on cross from approximately 9 A. M. to 3 P.M. on Wednesday (Matthew 27:35-49, Mark 15:24-36, Luke 23:33-46, John 19:18-30)

12. Died about 3 P.M. on Wednesday (Matthew 27:50-54, Mark 15:37-39, Luke 23:45-48, John 19:30-37)

From Jesus' arrest until his death was a period of approximately forty hours. During this time he was utterly humiliated, illegally "tried," savagely tortured, and relentlessly mocked.

Having studied the arrest of Jesus, I want to go again to his appearance before Annas and events associated with that appearance. The record in John now focuses on Peter, who had followed the group to the palace of the high priest.

John 18:15-18:

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

This was Peter's first denial. It was the only denial that occurred while Jesus was before Annas. It happened

as Peter entered the courtyard of the palace. The “other disciple which was known unto the high priest” is not named here. It may have been Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea.

The word “palace” in John 18:15 is the Greek word *aulff* and the Aramaic word *drtha*, both of which are used of an open courtyard around which a house is built. Peter had been standing outside the door which was the gate leading from the street to the courtyard. When the disciple known to the high priest spoke to the female porter keeping the door to the courtyard, she allowed Peter to enter the courtyard area where the fire was. There he warmed himself with servants and officers of the Temple. The Roman soldiers, having carried out the arrest, were gone by this time.

John 18:19-23:

The high priest [here referring to Annas] then asked Jesus of [about] his disciples, and of [about] his doctrine.

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers [of the Temple guard] which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand [*rhapisma*], saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Thus began the interrogation by Annas. According to the legalities of the day, an accused person had the right not to testify against himself. Judean law actually considered testimony against oneself to be insufficient for conviction. An accused person had to be proven guilty by other witnesses. Yet these rights were repeatedly violated throughout the trial of Jesus, beginning here with Annas.

In his response to Annas’ questions about his disciples and his doctrine, Jesus referred to the fact that the accusers needed the testimony of others. He was claiming his legal rights and drawing attention to a breach of law, declaring Annas should have others tell of the things which Jesus spoke and did openly. “Why are you asking me?” Jesus rightfully questioned. “Ask those who have heard me.”

One of the officers became angered when Jesus replied to the high priest in such a direct manner, so he struck Jesus. In Greek the phrase “struck with the palm of his hand” is the one word *rhapisma*. It can mean to slap sharply with the palms or to beat repeatedly with a rod. Since Jesus used the word “smitest,” in this case he must have been hit with a rod. The word “smitest” in verse 23 is the Greek word *derō*, meaning “to skin, flay, or scourge.” A rod here would have been a thin, flexible whip-like cane. Upon hitting the face it would easily bend and wrap around the face, cutting the flesh. This concludes the record of the preliminary interrogation conducted by Annas.

John 18:24:

Now Annas had [omit “had”] sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

The other three Gospels pick up the record with Jesus’ appearance before Caiaphas.

Matthew 26:57-60:

And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace [courtyard], and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none.

While Jesus appeared before Caiaphas, Peter sat with the servants. In John 18, while Jesus was before Annas, Peter had been standing. During this entire period Peter was cold, afraid, full of uncertainty, and torn between loyalty to his master and a mounting fear of the people around him.

Compared to this scene with Caiaphas, the interview with Annas seemed almost private. Now Jesus was before not only the high priest Caiaphas, but also the chief priests, the elders, and all the council. The council was the ruling body of Israel known as the Sanhedrin,

made up of seventy men. The expression “all the council” refers to their action as a collective body. Their action was not necessarily unanimous; the response simply reflected the will of the majority.²⁴ Jesus had challenged Annas to locate some witnesses; the council now sought out false witnesses.

Matthew 26:60:

But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses.

The phrase “found they none” means they found no false witnesses that had corroborating testimonies. This is explained in Mark 14:56 when it says, “. . . their witness agreed not together.” Finally two more false witnesses gave their testimony.

Matthew 26:61 and 62:

And [these two false witnesses] said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

24. Joseph of Arimathea is called “an honorable counsellor.” Nicodemus is called a Pharisee who was “ruler of the Jews.” Both expressions suggest that they were members of the Sanhedrin. Being disciples of Jesus they would not cast their votes against him. However, it is possible that they would vote against him if they thought that would make the vote unanimous because Judean law at that time considered a unanimous vote an acquittal because it demonstrated a biased jury. However, as we shall see, there is no evidence that a formal vote was taken. It was simply a mob response to the high priest’s accusation. These legalities were ignored in Jesus’ “trial.” See Mark 15:43, Luke 23:50 and 51, John 3:1.

The entire proceedings of Jesus' trial were a mockery of justice. These religious leaders were so desperate to condemn Jesus that they began these proceedings late at night, which in itself was illegal and highly unusual. Then, they deliberately tried to frame Jesus by seeking people who would give false testimony against him. According to Old Testament law, stated in Deuteronomy 17:6 and 7, the testimony of at least two witnesses was needed in order to establish guilt. These testimonies were to agree in order to be valid. If the witnesses were found to be lying, they were to endure the sentence of the accused, according to Deuteronomy 19:15-19. In Jesus' case the rulers were so intent on accusing Jesus that they intentionally sought false witnesses in addition to accepting the testimonies of witnesses who did not agree.

Another stipulation of Judean law was that once all the witnesses had testified and the council was considering the issue, at least one judge had to speak on behalf of the accused. Jesus was never afforded this defense. Another discrepancy was the charge itself. Jesus had never spoken of himself as the one to destroy the Temple.²⁵ Thus, this "trial" was a total breach of justice. There is no doubt that it was meant to be no more than a semblance of a trial. It was a kangaroo court perpetrated by the highest religious leaders.

25. John 2:19: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This is more fully explained in Appendix 8, " 'Destroy This Temple' ."

Finally two witnesses alleged that Jesus said he would destroy the Temple and then rebuild it in three days. Jesus did not respond. Then Caiaphas directed his own accusation toward Jesus and demanded a response.

Matthew 26:63:

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

For the high priest to say "I adjure thee by the living God" compelled the accused to answer; it was the most forceful demand possible. Of all the accusations of Jesus, the only one he responded to was the accusation of whether he were the Christ, the Son of God.

Matthew 26:64 and 65:

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said [an affirmative answer to Caiaphas' demand to "tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God"]: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

Jesus' response about his exalted position with God, which placed him above the high priest as God's anointed, so greatly disturbed Caiaphas that he rent his clothes. If Jesus had claimed to be God, the people would simply have laughed at him as being without his mental faculties.

Claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God, however, was plausible. In doing so, Jesus was challenging the rulers' authority over him. To claim to be God was lunacy, but to claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, was blasphemy if the claim was determined to be false.

Caiaphas tore his mantle in half, or as the King James Version says, "rent his clothes." This was an outer priestly garment or mantle symbolizing his authority. This custom of rending or tearing the mantle was an outward expression of extreme anger and grief. The Old Testament law, in Leviticus 10:6 and 21:10,26 forbade the high priest to do this, the consequence being death.

By asking, "What further need have we of witnesses?" the high priest violated Jesus' right to further testimony by other witnesses, witnesses outside of himself. Caiaphas quickly considered the issue settled: Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. Caiaphas forthwith called on the priests, elders, scribes, and Sanhedrin to declare their judgment. In actuality, these men had prejudged Jesus guilty.

Matthew 26:66:

What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

26. Leviticus 10:6: "And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled."

Leviticus 21:10: "And *he that* is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes."

There is no indication of an orderly, proper vote being taken as stipulated in the legal procedures of the Sanhedrin. It was a mob response to the high priest's accusation and question. In this manner the Sanhedrin passed the death sentence.

According to the law of Moses, slaying a man, touching a dead body, or touching a grave made one legally unclean for seven days. No one considered unclean could participate in the Passover. According to Roman law, the Sanhedrin could not pronounce and execute a death sentence without Roman permission. However, when religious matters were involved, the Sanhedrin often took matters into their own hands. This can be seen in the stoning of Stephen and previously attempted stonings of Jesus. Therefore, even though the Sanhedrin had judged Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy, their fear of the people, fear of legal defilement, and lack of legal authority prohibited them from putting him to death themselves.²⁷ As a result, they later had Jesus brought before the Romans with the fabricated charges of political treason. The following statement from the book *The Trial of Jesus Christ* provides much insight into Jesus' so-called trial before the Sanhedrin.

. . . The Jewish proceedings, whatever their true character, were overshadowed and dominated by the fact that before they commenced, the members of the Tribunal predetermined the result, namely, the death of the Accused. Such a prejudg-

27. See Matthew 26:4 and 5, Numbers 9:5-13, 19:11 and 16, 31:17-20. Also see Appendix 1, "The Preparations for the Feast."

ing of a case would be fatal to the validity of a trial under any system of jurisprudence. In view of this astounding fact, why were there any “proceedings” at all? It would seem that the Rulers of the Jews desired above all else that the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah should be rejected with every outward show of judicial authority and in a manner most calculated to carry conviction to and secure the support of all shades of Jewish religious and political opinion; that to ensure this result, the Pharisaic and Sadducean Judges sank their differences and staged a “trial,” which was in fact and in intent a mere colourable pretense of a lawfully convened and formally conducted trial, at which they purported to observe not only the agreed written law but such of the rules of the Oral Law as did not interfere with their united and unlawful pre-trial determination to put Jesus to death,²⁸

The laws of that time went to great lengths to give accused people the benefit of the doubt. Yet these religious leaders violated Old Testament law, Roman law, and the religious and civil laws of their time. They violated the universal laws of truth and honesty. It was mankind’s most depraved hour. Yet, according to God’s divine law and even human law, Jesus Christ himself remained perfectly innocent throughout it all. Jesus was the antithesis of the depravity around him. Jesus Christ died out of love for all men, including his accusers.

Matthew 26:67 and 68:

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted [Greek: *kolaphizō*, to beat repeatedly with fists] him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands [Greek: *rhapizō*, to cuff or beat with a rod],

28. Powell, *The Trial of Jesus Christ*, p.15.

Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Mark 14:65:

And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet [Greek: *kolaphizō*] him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands [*rhapisma*, a cuffing or slapping with the palms or beating with rods].

Luke 22:63-65:29

And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote [Greek: *derō*, skinned, flayed, or thrashed] *him*.

And when they had blindfolded him, they struck [*zuptō*, to mark or beat with repeated strokes] him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote [*paiō*, to strike with hand, fist, rod, or weapon] thee?

And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Imagine the most respected lawyers and religious leaders of your community assaulting an innocent man in the courtroom. It is outrageous even to consider such a travesty. Yet, that was the situation here. The accusers let no laws stand in their way. Through deceit, dishonesty, illegality, and cruelty, they showed their hatred of God’s only-begotten Son, *their* Messiah. They beat him without mercy, spat on him, and covered his face while taunting him to prophesy the identity of his unseen

29. Luke 22:63-65 records Jesus Christ’s appearance before the Sanhedrin after Peter’s denials. Matthew and Mark reverse the order, recording his appearance before the Sanhedrin prior to the denials. There is no contradiction. Peter’s denials and Jesus Christ’s “trial” before the Sanhedrin occurred simultaneously, but only one scene can be recorded at a time, hence the variation in order.

torturer. While his head was covered, they beat on it and thrashed him savagely, Think what Jesus looked like when they uncovered his face.

The next recorded event is Peter's second denial. This took place while Jesus was yet before Caiaphas.

Matthew 26:69 and 70:

Now Peter sat without in the palace [courtyard]: and a damsel [Greek: *paidiskē*] came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Mark 14:66-68:

And as Peter was beneath [below] in the palace [courtyard], there cometh one of the maids [Greek: *paidiskē*] of the high priest:

And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest....

Luke 22:55-57:

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall [courtyard], and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid [Greek: *paidiskē*] beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

And he [Peter] denied him [Jesus], saying, Woman, I know him not.

In each record a *paidiskē*, a young maiden, accused Peter of having been with Jesus. Mark 14:66 tells us she was a maid that served the high priest. Each record above places this denial in the courtyard area. The courtyard would be below the various rooms within the building, as Mark so accurately describes. Matthew tells us that this denial was before all those present in the courtyard.

The third denial occurred shortly after the second. The sole record of this is found in Luke.

Luke 22:58:

And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

The word “another” is *heteros* meaning here “another of a different kind.” *Heteros* is in the masculine gender. Unlike the previous accuser, this was a man, not a woman. The next event was the first cock-crowing, recorded only in Mark.

Mark 14:68:

... And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.³⁰

Peter went out into the porch, *proaulion*. This porch would have been the entire area under a large doorway

30. This phrase “and the cock crew” is omitted in some Aramaic and Greek sources. However, it is included by several major sources. The Peshitta text of the Aramaic and the codex Alexandrinus are two of the most notable sources to include it. It should be left in if God's word is to be accurate. The omission by others was likely a scribal attempt at “harmonization.” see Appendix 9, “Peter's Denials.”

that served as the entrance from the street to the courtyard. Peter, made uneasy by three accusations, squirmed out of the situation by going to the porch area. Then came the first cock-crowing. It occurred after the third denial, thus fulfilling Christ's first prediction of Peter's denials. However, there is no indication that Peter took notice of this first cock-crowing.

The fourth denial occurred while Peter was in the porch area.

Matthew 26:71 and 72:

And when he was gone out into the porch [as in Mark 14:68], another [*allos*] *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Mark 14:69 and 70:

And a maid [*paidiskē*] saw him again [the Codex Vaticanus, a fourth century manuscript, omits "again," whereas many manuscripts place "again" after "began"], and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

And he [Peter] denied it again. . . .

The word "porch" in Matthew 26:7 1 is *pulōn*. It is the large gate under the arch or entrance way forming the porch area. The word "maid" here in Matthew 26:71 is not in the text. However, it is implied from the previous verses. It is also implied by the usage of the word *allos* meaning "another of the same kind."³¹ This

31. In the text, *allos* is in the feminine form, *allē*.

accuser, though a different person from the second accuser, was also a young maiden (*paidiskē*) who served the high priest. This is in harmony with the denial shown above from Mark 14. That was Peter's fourth denial.

Before the fifth denial Peter wandered from the porch area back to the fire in the courtyard, for during this denial he was again warming himself at the fire.

John 18:25:

And Simon Peter stood and warmed [was standing and warming] himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He [Peter] denied *it*, and said, I am not.

Mark 14:70 and 71:

. . . And a little after [after the fourth denial in the porch], they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

Matthew 26:73 and 74:

And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. . . .

Each of the above Gospels records this denial when those standing at the fire began to accuse Peter. John 18 tells us that Peter was standing and warming himself at the fire in the courtyard. Matthew 26 and Mark 14 give

the added information that the accusers suspected Peter of being a follower of Jesus because of his Galilean dialect. Galileans spoke northern Aramaic while Judeans spoke a southern dialect. They had heard Peter speaking in his previous denials. Matthew and Mark also tell us that Peter's denial was accompanied by cursing and swearing. Peter's fear was building toward a climax.

The sixth and final denial is found in John 18 and Luke 22.

John 18:26 and 27:

One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman [a relative of the man] whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter then denied again....

Luke 22:59 and 60:

And about the space of one hour after [one hour after the previous denial recorded in Luke which had been the third one] another [*allos*, another of the same kind, this accuser also was a man as in the previously recorded third denial] confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest....

This last denial also took place at the fire, It happened very shortly after the fifth denial, In contrast to the fifth denial, this time the accuser was a man. We know from Luke 22:59 that it was a man who was confident of Peter's identity as a disciple. John 18:26 tells us this

accuser was a servant of the high priest and a relative of Malchus. He was one of the Temple guards who had been in the Garden of Gethsemane participating in the arrest of Jesus. In the garden earlier that night, he had seen Peter hastily pull out his dagger and cut Malchus' ear. He may also have watched Jesus heal it. Recalling this experience, the accuser recognized Peter. No wonder the man was confident. But Peter firmly denied Jesus for the sixth time.

Now comes an event recorded in each Gospel: the final cock-crowing.

Matthew 26:74:

... And immediately [*eutheōs*, directly, forthwith] the cock crew.

Since the last denial recorded in Matthew 26 is the fifth one, the cock is here said to have crowed "immediately" or "directly" after the fifth denial. Yet, obviously the sixth denial had to occur between that fifth denial and the cock-crowing. The accuracy of this becomes clear in the other Gospels.

Mark 14:72:

And the second time the cock crew....

Luke 22:60:

... And immediately [*parachrēma*, along with the thing itself], while he yet spake, the cock crew.

John 18:27:

... and immediately [*eutheōs*, directly, forthwith] the cock crew.

Mark 14:72 gives us the information that this was the second cock-crowing. Matthew said that the cock crew immediately or directly after the fifth denial. John uses the same terminology to tell us the cock crowed immediately upon the sixth denial. The key is in Luke where we find that the cock-crowing occurred “while he yet spake” the sixth denial. The fifth denial, sixth denial, and final cock-crowing occurred in rapid succession, but the crowing happened while the sixth denial was still on Peter’s lips. The minute accuracy of God’s Word is amazing.

Here is a review and summary of these denials of Peter:³²

1. The first denial occurred while Jesus was before Annas. Peter was accused by a young female doorkeeper as he entered the door from the street to the courtyard. A disciple “known unto the high priest” made arrangements for Peter to be allowed in. (John 18:15-18)
2. The second denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. The accuser was a young maiden who served the high priest. The location of this denial was by the fire in the courtyard. Peter was sitting. This denial was made before all in that area. (Matthew 26:69 and 70, Luke 22:55-57, Mark 14:66-68a)

32. For further details and background, see Appendix 9, “Peter’s Denials.”

3. The third denial also occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas, also by the fire in the courtyard. The accuser was a man. (Luke 22:58)

First cock-crowing (Mark 14:68b)

4. The fourth denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. It happened in the porch area, where the large door or gate was. The accuser was a maiden who served the high priest, a different maiden from the accuser who prompted denial number two. Judging from the location, she may have been one of the doorkeepers. (Matthew 26:71 and 72, Mark 14:69 and 70a)
5. The fifth denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. It happened in the courtyard area again with Peter standing next to the fire. This time there were several accusers that challenged him, citing his Galilean dialect as evidence of his discipleship to Jesus. After this denial, Peter began adamantly cursing and swearing, probably as an act to convince them he was not a disciple. (Matthew 26:73 and 74a, Mark 14:70b and 71, John 18:25)
6. The sixth denial occurred immediately after the fifth at the fire in the courtyard. The accuser was a servant of the high priest who had been present at the arrest in the garden. There he had seen Peter and now he confidently and quickly affirmed

the fifth accusation by recognizing Peter. While Peter yet spoke this denial, the cock crowed. (Luke 22:59 and 60a, John 18:26 and 27a)

Second cock-crowing (Matthew 26:74b, Mark 14:72a, Luke 22:60b, John 18:27b)

Peter fulfilled each prediction that Jesus had made. The denials occurred in the area of the porch and courtyard of the palace where Annas and Caiaphas were located. With each accusation and denial, Peter grew more uneasy and more afraid of being detected. He was surrounded by enemies. He restlessly stood up, sat down, stood up again, and walked back and forth from the fire in the courtyard to the porch. Finally, several of those at the fire began to accuse him. He vociferously denied the accusation with cursing and swearing. Then a man who had seen him at the arrest stepped in and confidently identified him. Just as Peter was pronouncing his final denial, the cock crowed the second time. The next event is heartrending.

Luke 22:61 and 62:

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter standing at the fire must have gotten a glimpse of his master through a door of the palace. Immediately

after the sixth denial and the final cock-crowing, his eyes met those of Jesus. By this time Jesus had already been badly beaten, he was already wounded and bloody. In an emotionally charged moment of internal turmoil and tension, Peter caught sight of his lord, beaten and humiliated, the one whom he had just denied. That moment was seared into Peter's memory. His mind instantly recalled each prophecy Jesus had made of his denials. Distressed by his own cowardly behavior and broken at the sight of his tortured lord, Peter turned, went out into the street, and wept bitterly.

Peter was not really a coward. He did have the courage to follow Jesus to the courtyard of the high priests, while the others scattered. Yet in this his master's time of great need, he had utterly failed to be true to him or even to acknowledge that he knew him. What a testimony to the frailty of man! Peter went away, harboring this realization in the very depths of his being. Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, was now a solitary soul, left alone to face the next day and a half of torture and suffering.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE THIRTEENTH OF NISAN: SUNRISE TO SUNSET

Because the events of the thirteenth of Nisan are given in such detail in the Gospels, this study of that day is divided into two parts. We have taken the developments of this day from its beginning at sunset on Monday, when Jesus and his disciples were eating the last supper, through the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and then was arrested. Jesus was then taken before the high priests where he was subjected to the mockery of a trial, and finally beaten and mocked by the Sanhedrin. This was Jesus' first appearance for trial before the Sanhedrin, which can be referred to as his "night trial." During this same time period, Peter had come to the palace of Annas and Caiaphas where he denied his master six times. The next information given about Jesus takes place close to dawn, early on Tuesday morning.

Matthew 27:1:

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

Mark 15:1:

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. . . .

Luke 22:66-71:

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Each of these records given above from Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 22 focuses on one and the same event. It is Jesus Christ's second appearance for trial before the Sanhedrin, which can be called his "day trial." The people before whom Jesus had appeared the previous night, only a few hours before, were now reconvened. The whole council of the Sanhedrin was there. The chief priests, the elders of the people, the

scribes, recorders, and legal counselors were all in attendance. This "trial" has the appearance of being more proper than the one which had taken place just a few hours previously. The Sanhedrin had a legal standard mandating two trial appearances for capital offenses. Thus, with an outward show of justice, they continued to subject Jesus to their illegal proceedings.

What exactly happened to Jesus between that night trial and this one? God's Word does not say. The denials of Peter and the night trial of Jesus were probably over by 1:30 on Tuesday morning.¹ The religious leaders were absolutely outraged and fanatically determined to make Jesus suffer. They had already mocked, beaten, thrashed, and scourged him. They could well have had him beaten throughout the rest of the night. Jesus had caused them so much trouble and had embarrassed the religious leaders so many times that now was their opportunity to vent their wrath and retaliate.

In this early Tuesday morning confrontation the chief priests and elders asked him basically the same thing they had asked him a few hours before: "Art thou the Christ?" Jesus essentially gave them the same honest, affirmative answer: Yes, he was the Messiah. He was the Son of God and one day he would sit at God's right hand. They decided again that this personal testimony made him worthy of death. With this "blasphemy," they bound Jesus and dragged him to the Roman ruler, Pontius Pilate.

1. See Appendix 9, "Peter's Denials."

Luke 23:1:

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

John 18:28:

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early. . . .

Pontius Pilate was the Roman prefect or governor of Judea. As such, he was invested with the legal authority of life and death of the inhabitants of Judea. He had legal control, if he chose to utilize it, over the priests and the Temple treasury. He could even reverse capital sentences passed by the Sanhedrin. Pilate was generally unpopular with the Judeans and was in fact hated by many, because he was an outsider (a Gentile and a Roman) who had ordered many unpopular and cruel governmental actions.

John 18:28 tells us it was yet early when Jesus was brought to appear before Pilate in the hall of judgment. It must have been soon after the Sanhedrin had gathered around daybreak, according to Luke 22:66 and 23:1. This makes it probable that the records in John 18:28-38 and Luke 23:1-6 record the same appearance before Pilate. This was Jesus Christ's first appearance before Pilate. It was early morning on Tuesday, the thirteenth of Nisan. Later he would appear before Herod Antipas and then return for a second trial appearance before Pilate. John gives more details about this first appearance before Pilate.

John 18:28:

. . . and they [the Judean religious leaders] themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

Pilate was a Gentile. For a Judean to enter the court of a Gentile so near to the Passover would cause him to be ceremonially unclean and unable to participate in the Passover.² Here again is further proof that Passover and the Passover meal had not yet transpired. It is ironic that these religious leaders should suddenly become so legalistic about observing the Passover when they had broken one law after another during their own makeshift "trial" of Jesus. It is remarkable how false religion can twist the minds of men.

John 18:29:

Pilate then went out unto them [the chief priests and elders], and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

Putting Luke 23 and John 18 together shows the details of their response to Pilate's question.

John 18:30:

They answered and said unto him [Pilate], If he [Jesus] were not a malefactor [evildoer], we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

2. Ezra 6:19-21 is another record where separation from idolatrous Gentiles was necessary to eat the Passover. The judgment hall was a place of torture and death. Entering it could also have been associated with defilement according to the laws regarding the touching of a dead body or touching other items associated with death as set forth in Numbers 9:5-13 and 19:11-22.

Luke 23:2:

And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

John 18:30 relates that the accusers told Pilate they would not have brought this man to him had he not been an evildoer. Finally, as Luke 23:2 shows, three charges were leveled against Jesus: he perverted the nation, he forbade tax payment to Caesar, and he claimed to be a king, God's Messiah. The first charge was vague; the second charge was false and unprovable. Note that neither of these two charges had surfaced during the interrogations and trials held previously. But both of these charges were related to the third charge. This last charge, that he was the Christ, seemed to Pilate to be a religious question, especially in view of the fact that the religious leaders were bringing the charge. Pilate knew better than to involve himself in such matters.

John 18:31 and 32:

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful [according to the governing Roman laws] for us to put any man to death:

That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled,³ which he spake, signifying what [manner of, method of] death he should die.

Verse 32 of John 18 simply calls attention to the fact that Jesus would die a Roman death; this means he

3. See Appendix 7, "That it Might be Fulfilled."

would die by crucifixion, as he had prophesied. A Judean execution would have meant stoning him.

It is notable that none of those who tried Jesus wanted to take the responsibility for executing him. Pilate wanted the Judeans to judge Jesus according to the Old Testament law and their religious law. But the Judeans insisted that it was illegal for them to put a man to death. By Roman law, only the Romans could pass and execute a capital sentence. As noted before, the religious leaders were known to ignore this technicality and take matters into their own hands. However, in Jesus' case, they wanted Pilate to do their disreputable work for them. If they could persuade Pilate to cooperate, people could not turn on the priests and elders to blame them for killing Jesus, especially so close to Feast time.⁴ Furthermore, anyone directly killing a person at this time would become legally unclean for the Feast according to Old Testament law.⁵ These are the reasons the religious accusers utilized the legal technicality that only the Romans were to execute a death sentence. They further supported this by presenting Jesus' claims to be a king as political treason. This was not the charge of blasphemy of which they had previously condemned

4. See Matthew 26:3-5: "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*. But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

5. See Numbers 9:5-13, 19:11 and 16, 31:17-20; Appendix 1, "The Preparations for the Feast."

Jesus, for they knew Pilate would find blasphemy an unacceptable religious charge.

John 18:33-38:

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king [again, an affirmative answer]. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at *all*.

Luke 23:3 and 4:

And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it*.

Then said Pilate to the chief priests and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man.

While Pilate did not comprehend what Jesus was saying, it was clear to him that Jesus was not looking for

political power. If Jesus had wanted to be that kind of king, Pilate would have considered him a threat to both Caesar and himself, for Pilate himself was then ruler of the Judeans. But Pilate realized that Jesus was not seeking political position. After personally interrogating Jesus, Pilate declared to the Judeans that he had found no fault with the accused.

God's Word does not say how many Judeans were present. From the context, it is clear that all the religious leaders who had sentenced Jesus were there. Included were the chief priests, scribes, elders, and the seventy of the Sanhedrin. These religious leaders were described as a "multitude" in Luke 23:1. The Gospel of Luke gives more details on this first appearance before Pilate and some subsequent events.

Luke 23:5-7:

And they [the chief priests] were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

The religious leaders were determined to convince Pilate that Jesus was dangerous. Pilate, wanting to avoid dealing further with this matter, found a convenient

excuse for transferring the responsibility of Jesus' judgment to someone else. Since Jesus was a Galilean, Pilate immediately wanted Jesus taken to the ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas. And it so happened that Herod was in Jerusalem at this very time.

This Herod was a son of Herod the Great, the man who sought the life of Jesus shortly after hearing of his birth from the wise men. Herod Antipas, like his father, was an unscrupulous man, he had imprisoned John the Baptist and then was tricked by his wife and her daughter into beheading the prophet. For some time after John's beheading, Herod Antipas had heard stories that Jesus was John raised from the dead. On one occasion, Jesus described Herod as a "fox,"⁶ depicting Herod's sly, vicious character. With this background, the next confrontation can be more fully understood.

Luke 23:8-12:

And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Then he [Herod] questioned with him [Jesus] in many words; but he [Jesus] answered him nothing.

And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

6. Luke 13:32: "And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected."

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought [treated him with contempt], and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

This is the only record of Jesus' appearing before Herod, Herod mocked Jesus by desiring that he entertain him with a miracle. Then he interrogated Jesus, but Jesus did not respond. At the time of this questioning by Herod, the religious leaders were still hovering around shouting their accusations. The Word of God says Herod put a "gorgeous robe" on Jesus. The word "gorgeous" in Greek is *lampros* meaning "bright" or "resplendent." The word "robe" in Greek is *esthēs* meaning "ornate raiment." Annoyed by Jesus' silence, Herod mocked him by putting royal robes on this beaten man. His soldiers dressed Jesus in a gorgeous, resplendent piece of apparel. It was very ornate, of the kind that would be worn by a king, They were mocking Jesus' claim that he was a king.

This is the first of four different garments placed on Jesus before he was finally clothed in his own seamless tunic and his own outer garment and led forth to be crucified. Little did his enemies know how far he surpassed any royal robe or title. Ultimately, Jesus Christ was not mocked; man mocked his own stupidity in mocking the Son of God.

The series of ironies in these remarkable events could not be greater. For instance, it is ironic that on this day Pilate and Herod became friends after having feuded with each other for so long, and that Herod finally sent Jesus back to Pilate wearing this “royal” robe. It is also ironic that the true, eternal king was treated so disgracefully by the temporal rulers.

In the meantime, while Jesus was embroiled in one torture after another, Judas returned to the Temple with the money paid him for his act of betrayal. This record is unique to the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 27:3 and 4:

Then Judas, which had betrayed him [Jesus] , when he [Judas] saw that he [Jesus] was condemned, repented himself [“himself” is not in the text], and brought again [returned] the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the [omit “the”] innocent blood.

The word “repented” in verse 3 is the Greek word *metamelomai* meaning “to regret or be annoyed at the consequences of an act.” It literally means “after-care.” It is not the word used that signifies a repentance from sin, rather *metamelomai* simply expresses Judas’ regret that Jesus was being condemned to death. In betraying Jesus, Judas did not believe that things would actually turn out as they did. Confused and frustrated by the consequences of his action, Judas brought the betrayal money back to the religious leaders at the

Temple and claimed Jesus’ innocence, Perhaps he hoped that giving back the money would ease his conscience, or perhaps he thought he could use the money to make a deal and change Jesus’ fate. The religious leaders were interested in neither his problems nor in the money.

Matthew 27:4:

... And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.

In essence they were saying, “So what? That money doesn’t concern us anymore, *You* take care of it,” Now that Judas had served their purpose, the Temple leaders were finished with him. They had simply used him to serve their own ends; his personal feelings of regret and guilt were his own problem.

Matthew 27:5:

And he [Judas] cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

This verse when related to Acts 1:18 has been misunderstood for several reasons.⁷ People have maintained that the thirty pieces of silver Judas was paid to betray Jesus was the selfsame “reward of iniquity” spoken of in Acts. In maintaining this, they have consistently overlooked the fact that here in Matthew 27 Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver into the Temple, so he no longer had the money. How could he purchase the

7. Acts 1:18: “Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.”

field referred to in Acts 1 with thirty pieces of silver he no longer had? As we'll see when we study Acts 1, the answer is very simple. The "reward of iniquity" was money which he had stolen from the apostles' treasury, not the betrayal money.

The second misunderstanding of Matthew 27:5 is that Judas, after casting down the silver in the Temple, immediately went and committed suicide by hanging himself. Later in this study we'll see very clearly that Judas did not kill himself until after the ascension which was more than forty days later, as recorded in Acts 1:18. According to God's Word, Judas was with the other apostles during those forty days; he was not dead.

The third misunderstanding in this verse concerns the words "hanged himself." There is abundant evidence that the phrase "hanged himself" in Matthew 27:5 is an inaccurate translation. In the Greek, this reflexive verb is the one word *apanchomai*. Matthew 27:5 is the only Biblical usage of this verb. In secular literature *apanchomai* is used to mean "choking or squeezing one's self" as with great emotion or grief.⁸ In Estrangelo Aramaic the word translated "hanged himself" is *knq*, also meaning "choked." The word *knq* is used other places in God's Word and does not imply death at all. In

8. The word is related to the Latin *angustus* from which is derived the English word "anguish." Our English expression "choked up" is a figurative usage similar to that of the Greek word. Indeed the Greek word is used this way in ancient literature, as "to choke with anger or grief." *Apanchomai*, as the middle voice of *apanchō*, can mean "to become choked up (from emotion)." There are some interesting manuscript variations. For further details see Appendix 10, "Judas' Death."

relation to the parable of the sower, the thorns (cares of the world) "choke," *knq*, the seed (God's Word) so that it becomes unfruitful. The seed does not necessarily die, it is simply stifled from growing and bearing fruit (Mark 4:7 and 19). The word *knq* is also used in Matthew 18:28 in a parable. Here it is used of choking a person and then throwing him in prison. Neither the Aramaic nor the Greek words imply death at all.

In the context of Matthew 27:5, when Judas came to the Temple and threw down the thirty pieces of silver, he was very upset over what was happening to Jesus. To add to his emotional turmoil, the religious leaders whom he had previously helped showed total indifference to his feelings of regret. So in despair and confusion, Judas left the Temple. In view of the word *apancho mai*, Judas must have left doubled over, squeezing himself in tremendous grief. Thus a literal translation according to usage of Matthew 27:5 is, "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and withdrew, isolating himself, and departing, doubled himself over with grief."

Matthew 27:6-10:

And the chief priests took the silver pieces [which Judas had cast down in the Temple], and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

The chief priests who had taken Temple money, paid for the arrest of God's Son, and had him sentenced to death by a dishonest trial, now had "religious" reasons for not putting the money back in the Temple treasury. The money used in arranging the capture of Jesus (which act ended in death) was "blood money." Consequently they used the money to purchase a field in which to bury strangers. The field the chief priests bought was completely different from the property bought by Judas as referred to in Acts 1:18. This one bought by the priests in Matthew was called "the field of blood" because it was bought with blood money. They bought it with money that had purchased the life of Jesus Christ, with the result that a prophecy spoken by Jeremiah was fulfilled.

In chronological order the next record is the second appearance of Jesus before Pilate. After his first appearance (Luke 23:1-6), Jesus was sent to Herod (Luke 23:7-12), and from there he was returned to Pilate (Luke 23:13-24). This second appearance before Pilate is found in each of the four Gospels. It begins with Pilate's interrogating Jesus once again.

Matthew 27:11-14:

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not bow many things they witness against thee?

And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

Mark 15:2-5:

And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold bow many things they witness against thee.

But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

Notice that Jesus did a minimum of speaking. Pilate was astonished at Jesus' attitude and controlled expression. Jesus simply said nothing.

Luke 23:13:

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people.

Pilate had now called together everybody: the priests, the rulers, and the people. No longer did Pilate speak

only to the religious leaders. This gathering to hear Pilate took place outside of the judgment hall in the area of the judgment seat. There a great crowd could gather. The following passages record Jesus Christ's second "trial" appearance before Pilate. During this second appearance, Pilate would go out before the people three times to appeal to them. The record begins to unfold in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 15:6 and 7:

Now at *that* feast he [Pilate] released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

These verses again describe the custom of releasing a prisoner at the Feast near Passover time.⁹ Barabbas appears to have been not only a bandit or robber, but he also enjoyed notoriety as a political rebel, being involved in an attempted insurrection against Roman rule. For this reason, Barabbas was probably popular at this time with the common people as they were constantly annoyed by their Roman subjugation. During the political insurrection in which Barabbas had participated, he had committed murder. Yet Pilate was willing to offer the release of such a political nuisance as Barabbas while prosecuting a man in whom he found no fault.

9. John 18:39, Luke 23:17, and Matthew 27:15 document the custom.

Realizing it is close to the Passover time, the people began to clamor for Pilate to initiate the proceedings which would mean the release of a prisoner.

Mark 15:8:

And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

Pilate responded to their wishes.

Matthew 27:16-18:

And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. [Pilate understood the motivation of the men who had brought Jesus to him. He wasn't being fooled.]

The two oldest Aramaic manuscripts and an abundance of Greek manuscripts do not simply call the prisoner "Barabbas"; rather they give his full name "Jesus Barabbas" in verses 16 and 17. No doubt the name "Jesus" was deliberately deleted in other manuscripts for reverential considerations.¹⁰

The name "Jesus" means "Jah is savior" or "Jah is salvation." "Jah" is a contracted form of "Jehovah." The name "Barabbas" is a surname literally meaning "son of the father." The parallel between Barabbas as

10. See Appendix 11, "Jesus Barabbas."

“Jesus the son of the father” and Christ as “Jesus the Son of the Father” is spiritually significant. The counterfeit is unmistakable. The choice was between two: the first was “Jesus the son of the father,” who was a man well known as an insurgent who had committed murder; the other choice was “Jesus the Son of the Father,” who was the Messiah. His Father was God Almighty, the God who had delivered Israel from oppression time and again in their long history, Jesus Christ was, in reality, their long-awaited redeemer.

Pilate began by giving the crowd a choice: did they want Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Christ to be released? Personally, Pilate wanted to see Jesus Christ go free, but the pressure to please the religious Judeans was very great. In order to shift the burden of responsibility, Pilate took this issue to the rest of the people, giving them the choice. However, after he had already given the people a choice, Pilate’s wife complicated Pilate’s situation further.

Matthew 27:19:

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

No doubt this message from his wife intensified Pilate’s desire to have Jesus released. What an awkward moment this had become for Pilate, Since he had already

committed himself to giving the people a choice between Jesus Barabbas and Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:20 and 21:

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Mark 15:9-11:

But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

John 18:39 and 40:

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.¹¹

Incited by the religious leaders, the crowd called for Barabbas to be released. In a moment of desperation, Pilate made the following proposal.

11. In summarizing the events of the trial, the revelation in John includes many details the other Gospels do not record. Conversely, John does not include many aspects that the other Gospels have. Between John 18:38 and 39 there is a period of time in which much occurs, including Jesus’ appearance to Herod (Luke 23:7.12).

Luke 23:14-17:

[Pilate] Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

Pilate wanted to release Jesus. However, he had gotten himself into a corner by already having given the crowd a choke as to whom should be released. Pilate reasoned with the people that Jesus was an innocent man. However, his logic did not change the mood of the crowd.

Luke 23:18 and 19:

And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas.

(Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

The crowd's decision was definite: Do away with Jesus Christ and release Barabbas, the criminal rebel. This concludes Pilate's first appeal to all the people from the seat of judgment.

Though Pilate now was committed to release Barabbas, he still did not want to inflict capital punishment on Jesus. He had offered to chastise Jesus and let him go,

but to no avail. Still maneuvering, Pilate had Jesus scourged in hopes that he could then convince the people that Jesus had suffered enough and should be released.

John 19:1-3:

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged [*mastigoō*] *him*.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands [*rhapisma*].

The Greek word "scourge" is *mastigoō* meaning "to scourge with a lash or rod," "to whip," or "to flog." The soldiers stripped Jesus, tied him to a post, and brutally flogged him. At the end of the thongs of this whip there were pieces of metal or bone. The soldiers plaited or braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head. As they continuously beat on him, the pain Jesus was suffering is impossible to describe or fathom.

The word "purple" is the Aramaic word *argwna* and the Greek word *porphureos* meaning "purple" or "reddish purple." This was the color often used to signify royalty. The word "robe" in Greek is *himation* meaning any type of outer garment, but especially the mantle. It could refer to a large outer cloak or to a smaller mantle which went around the neck and hung down the front. Thus he was once more mockingly dressed as a king, this time by Pilate's soldiers.

After “crowning” Jesus and attiring him in this purple, royal-looking garment, the soldiers began to taunt him, saying, “Hail, King of the Judeans.” What a cruel spectacle! Imagine the humiliation! Then, as if the previous flogging and mockery were not enough, they smote him. The words “smote him with the palms of their hands” are again the one word *rhapisma* meaning to beat with the palms or with rods. His torture and consequent suffering was indescribable.

After this torturing and taunting, Pilate decided again to take the issue to the people, offering them another chance to change their minds.

John 19:4 and 5:

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

Mutilated beyond recognition, wearing a garb which by its color implied royalty, and wearing a ridiculous crown of thorns, Jesus was again brought out for public display. Pilate then stated, “Look, this is to show you that I found no fault with the man.” His statement implied that despite the soldiers’ unmerciful torture of Jesus, they could get him to admit no wrong. Pilate said, “Behold the man,” imploring the crowd to look at someone who was looking less and less like a human

being. Pilate desperately wanted to convince them that Jesus had been sufficiently chastised to satisfy their fiendish desire to see him punished and humiliated and that now he should be released. At the same time Pilate was not prepared to challenge the will of the people. This was the second time Pilate went out from the judgment hall to the area of the judgment seat and appealed to the people. Records of this second appeal are found in the other Gospels as well.

Luke 23:20:

Pilate therefore, willing [desiring] to release Jesus, spake again to them.

Matthew 27:22:

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?

Mark 15:12:

And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

Pilate, in making this appeal, clearly hoped the people would call for him to release Jesus. By exhibiting Jesus as a beaten, bleeding, mocked man, Pilate desired to convince the crowd that Jesus had been punished enough. We must understand that though Pilate had the authority to release Jesus, his overriding desire in this situation was to please the crowd. Thus, without the crowd’s approval, he would not make the decision he actually wanted to make, which was to release Jesus.

Pilate's chastisement of Jesus still did not satisfy the crowd's craving for brutality. By this time, Barabbas' fate was no longer an issue. Pilate asked what they would have him to do with Jesus. Following the cue of the religious leaders, the crowd clamored for Jesus' crucifixion.

John 19:6:

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*.

Luke 23:21:

But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

Mark 15:13:

And they cried out again, Crucify him.

Matthew 27:22:

... *They* all say unto him [Pilate], Let him be crucified.

After this crowd response to his second appeal, Pilate looked directly at the religious leaders and attempted to pass back to them the responsibility for the life of this man.

John 19:6 and 7:

... Pilate saith unto them [the religious leaders] , Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

Pilate told them to crucify Jesus themselves according to their own law, because according to Roman law he

had found no fault in Jesus. Yet, even though Pilate had told them to crucify him, crucifixion was a mode of death used by the Romans, not the Judeans. The leaders replied that Jesus had committed a capital offence according to Judean law, that offence being that he made himself the Son of God. This was the first time Pilate heard that charge. Before this, the accusation had been his claim to being a king. Pilate had already made a mockery of that. But the claim of being the Son of God deeply troubled Pilate. Jesus had already caused him to marvel greatly by the way he had handled himself. Pilate was in terrible confusion and fear. Perhaps he thought that Jesus really could be the Son of God. He certainly considered this Galilean unusual, mystifying, even awesome.

John 19:8-11:

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee bath the greater sin.

Pilate returned into the judgment hall to interrogate Jesus again, specifically to learn from him, "Whence art

thou?" He desperately wanted Jesus to answer the charge and provide him with a reason to release him. While Pilate spoke of power to release, Jesus responded that God had the ultimate power and that "he that delivered" Jesus to Pilate had the greater sin than Pilate. Judas did not deliver Jesus to Pilate. Caiaphas, the high priest, had delivered him. In this moment of intense mental struggle and turmoil, still wanting to see Jesus released, Pilate went and appealed to the people for the third time.

John 19:12-15:

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

And it was the preparation of the passover,¹² and about the sixth hour [noon]: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Once again Pilate, sitting on the judgment seat, exhibited Jesus publicly. "The preparation of the passover" simply refers to the fact that all this was transpiring during the preparation period, before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.¹² It is ironic

12. The first part of John 19:14, "And it was the preparation of the passover," is omitted in the following four Greek manuscripts: MS 264, 557, 747, and 2389. See Appendix 1, "The Preparations for the Feast."

that this would be stated here when the people were, in a symbolic sense, preparing Jesus as the Passover lamb. Here it is Tuesday, the thirteenth of Nisan at "about the sixth hour," which means about noon. Some theologians have tried to say that the time was midnight or even 6:00 A. M. Pilate would not have gathered a crowd to pass judgment at midnight. The Sanhedrin had tried Jesus at daybreak and then brought him to Pilate while it was still early. Jesus was then interrogated, sent to Herod, returned to Pilate, flogged, and presented to the people so that most of the morning would have passed by. Rather than dawn, it would logically be close to noon by the time referred to in John 19:14. In Biblical usage midnight is only called "midnight" or "the middle of the night," never "the sixth hour." Six o'clock in the morning would be called "dawn" or possibly "the first hour."

This simple, plain reference to time should have caught our attention long ago and eliminated the tremendous confusion in setting the chronology prior to the crucifixion. Many have taught that the last supper, arrest, and cock-crowings were the night before his appearances to Pilate and his crucifixion. His crucifixion was at "the third hour" (Mark 15:25), our 9 A.M. Yet here in John 19:14 it says that Jesus was before Pilate at *noon*, the sixth hour, after he had already been on trial before the Sanhedrin earlier in the morning. There is no one who can make any of these events fit chronologically unless he recognizes that this was only Tuesday,

the thirteenth of Nisan, around noon, and that it was the day before Jesus was crucified.

As Pilate began his final appeal to the crowd to allow him to let Jesus go, the Judeans accused Pilate himself of betraying the Roman Emperor, Caesar, if he were to release Jesus. Why? Because anyone who claimed to be a king, as Jesus had done, surely was an enemy of the Roman king, Caesar. This was quite a serious charge against a Roman governor like Pilate. It obviously put more pressure than ever on him. As he sat down on the judgment seat, Pilate was desperate. Grasping for straws in the wind, he tried to put the issue back on their shoulders by saying, "Behold YOUR king!" and "Shall I crucify YOUR king?" He was telling them that Jesus claimed to be *their* king, not a Roman king. Did they want one of their own to be crucified? The religious leaders, who supposedly despised Gentile rule, now retorted, "We have no king but Caesar." Pilate had run out of arguments. Fearful of the religious leaders and people and intimidated by their threat of associating him with treason against Caesar, Pilate would compromise his responsibility and authority. Even though he had found Jesus totally innocent, Pilate would give in to their demand rather than carry out justice according to Roman law.

Besides John 19, this third and final appeal by Pilate to the crowd is also recorded in the other Gospels with some added detail.

Matthew 27:23:

And the governor [Pilate] said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

Mark 15:14:

Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Luke 23:22 and 23:

And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Luke 23 specifically states that this was the third time Pilate spoke or appealed to the people. That fits perfectly with the other Gospels. On this final appeal he once again declared Jesus' innocence and offered to chastise him once more and release him. Pilate charged the crowd to answer his question, "What evil hath he done?" The mob ignored Pilate's rational question and emotionally cried out "Crucify him!" Pilate's final act was an intense climax to the extraordinary chain of events preceding it.

Matthew 27:24:

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.

When Pilate washed his hands in water, he was acting out a custom which signified that he was taking no responsibility in the matter. Even though he was the governor and had the legal authority over such proceedings as this one, Pilate obviously feared the Judean people greatly and refused to go against their will. When the Judeans threatened to accuse Pilate of not being a friend of Caesar by releasing a man who “maketh himself a king,” Pilate’s fear of the crowd was intensified. Yet at the same time, Pilate was loath to execute this mysterious, awesome, unique, innocent Galilean who endured silently the beatings and humiliation reserved for the vilest of criminals. Pilate was in a vise. Completely exasperated, he consented to send Jesus to be crucified, while simultaneously saying he would not take responsibility for the spilling of this man’s blood.

Matthew 27:25:

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

Luke 23:24 and 25:

And Pilate gave sentence [or “assented”] that it should be as they required.

And he released unto them him [Barabbas] that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Even though the Romans carried it out, the Judeans willingly accepted full responsibility for the execution

of Jesus Christ, the king of kings and lord of lords, the savior of all mankind. Some misguided people have attempted to assert that all mankind killed Jesus Christ, and therefore, we living today are responsible for it. Yet the Bible clearly states that it was the religious leaders of the Judeans who were the responsible ones.¹³

In delivering Jesus to his accusers’ will, Pilate had him flogged by his soldiers again with whips with pieces of metal or bone on the end of the thongs.

Mark 15:15:

And *so* Pilate, willing [*boulomai*, deciding] to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged [*phragelloō*, to whip] *him*, to be crucified.

Matthew 27:26:

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged [*phragelloō*] Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

John 19:16:

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

When Pilate gave consent to the people and proceeded to wash his hands of the responsibility for Jesus’ fate, it was still Tuesday, the thirteenth of Nisan, about noon. Understanding this, the next events must have begun that Tuesday afternoon. Upon leaving Pilate, Jesus was not immediately taken and crucified. He was first taken by the Roman soldiers back into the Praetorium, the

13. See Acts 2:23, 3:14 and 15, 4:10, and 5:26-30 where Judeans, not Romans, are held responsible for Jesus’ death.

judgment hall. Pilate's appeals had been made just outside of the Praetorium. The Praetorium was in the large royal palace where Pilate as the provincial governor resided when in Jerusalem. Numerous soldiers were also there at this time.

Matthew 27:27-31:

Then the soldiers of the governor [Pilate] took Jesus into the common hall [of the governor's palace] , and gathered unto him the whole band [*speira*, cohort] of soldiers.

And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet [*kokkinos*, crimson or deep scarlet] robe [*chlamus*, a wide, coarse military cloak].

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote [*tuptō*, to beat repeatedly with a stick] him on the head.

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe [*chlamus*] off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

Mark 15:16-20:

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

And they clothed him with purple [*porphura*, a purple garment], and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

And they smote [*tuptō*, to beat repeatedly with a stick] him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple [*porphura*] from him, and put his own clothes [*himation*, outer garments] on him, and led him out to crucify him.

These few verses contain all that is recorded of the events between the time Jesus left Pilate shortly after Tuesday noon and the time he was led out for crucifixion early on Wednesday, the next morning. These verses tell all that the Scriptures reveal about the next eighteen to twenty hours. Not realizing the chronology of events and the extended time period involved, most people have not fully appreciated the duration of the suffering our savior went through.

To summarize the events following Pilate's giving in to the mob: first the soldiers flogged Jesus; then, in the judgment hall an entire band (or "cohort") of four to six hundred soldiers gathered for the single purpose of torturing and mocking this one man. The soldiers stripped Jesus of the purple garment Pilate had placed on him. Then, as we learn from Mark 15, they put on him another purple garment. Over this they draped a crimson military cloak which would normally be worn on the outside. These comprise the third and fourth articles of clothing put on him by his torturers. Then the Soldiers plaited or braided his second crown of

thorns, the first having been plaited while he was before Pilate. They put the crown of thorns on his head as a mock-crown and put a reed in his right hand as a mock-scepter. Imagine hundreds of soldiers converging on and sadistically abusing this one battered man.

Jesus Christ was again mockingly dressed as a great king and conqueror. The soldiers taunted him and bowed before him. They spit on him, took the reed from him, and began to repeatedly beat him with it on the head. The thorns pressing into his head would have intensified the pain as they beat him. The pain had to have been excruciating, the humiliation unthinkable, the bleeding profuse.

How long did this mockery go on? We do not know. Did the soldiers continue to scourge and beat him throughout the afternoon, night, and morning? Did they allow him to sleep? God's Word is silent on these matters. Yet an entire cohort of soldiers could torture one man for many hours.

With sunset of that Tuesday afternoon ended the thirteenth of Nisan. More events are detailed on that day in Nisan than on any other day recorded in the whole Bible. From the last supper, to the prayers in the garden, to the denials of Peter, to the illegal trials, to the continuous scourgings and, finally, to this scene in the Praetorium, we see the picture of our savior's endurance, love, and obedience in the face of unparalleled evil. By this time the prophecy of Isaiah 52:14

saying that "his visage was so marred more than any man" was already fulfilled.

Sunset on Tuesday began the fourteenth of Nisan, the most ignoble day in all human history. That momentous day began with a night of torture followed by the death of God's Passover lamb dying for the sin and sins of mankind.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FOURTEENTH OF NISAN

Jesus Christ's crucifixion is one of the most written-about subjects in human history. In terms of meaning, it is only surpassed by his resurrection and its implications. Yet despite the volumes that have been written, seldom has anyone clearly and accurately set forth the record.

We have seen time and again throughout this research that traditional teachings repeatedly contradict the accuracy of the Word of God. And so often tradition has thus blinded us from the fullness of God's greatness. For example, people have taught that Jesus Christ was in the custody of Caiaphas, and Pilate just a few hours. This cannot be true if the Word of God is accurate. Jesus was taken captive in the Garden of Gethsemane on Monday evening. After many documented intervening events, Jesus was sent by Pilate to the Praetorium about

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11 Jerusalem at Temple Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	12 Preparation of room for the Passover Matt. 26:6-19 Mark 14:3-36 Luke 22:3-13	13 Trial & Torture Matt. 26:20-31a Mark 14:17-15:20a Luke 22:14-23:25 John 13:1-19:16a
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

1. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8 6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	9 1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	10 Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14 Crucifixion Matt. 27:31b-61 Mark 15:20b-47 John 19:16b-42 The Passover sacrifice	15	16	17
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

noon on Tuesday. God's Word does not give details in terms of time from Tuesday afternoon until Wednesday morning. We are informed, however, that a cohort of Roman soldiers tortured and mocked Jesus during this time. The Gospel accounts begin marking time again on Wednesday morning, the fourteenth of Nisan, while Jesus was still in Pilate's judgment hail, the Praetorium, almost a day and a half after being taken prisoner.

Matthew 27:31 and 32:

And after that they [the soldiers] had mocked him, they took the robe [Greek: *chiamus*] off from him, and put his own raiment [Greek: *himation*, outer garments] on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear [Greek: *afro*, to raise, to carry] his cross.

Mark 15:20 and 21:

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple [Greek: *porphura*] from him, and put his own clothes [*himation*, outer garments] on him, and led him out to crucify him.

And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear [*airo*, to raise, to carry] his cross.

Luke 23:26:

And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear [Greek: *pherō*, sustain, support] *it* after [behind] Jesus.

All of the above records are clear. After beating and mocking Jesus, the soldiers put his own garments on him and began to lead him out of Pilate's hail towards the place of crucifixion, Golgotha. The word "led" used in all three of the above scriptures can also be translated "dragged" or "carried."² As they left the judgment hail, the soldiers randomly singled out Simon of Cyrene from the crowd, laid the cross on him, and forced him to carry it behind Jesus. There is absolutely no indication that Jesus touched the cross during any of this. He certainly was in no physical condition to carry a cross; he had so suffered that he could not even carry his own body's weight. The soldiers had to support Jesus under the arms and drag him to Calvary.

Simon seems to have been a Judean from the city of Cyrene in Libya. He had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He had no more desire to go to a criminal's execution than you or I have. Yet he became one of the central figures in the events of that Wednesday morning. Imposed upon Simon was a task of utmost humiliation in having to do the will of the Roman soldiers and carry the cross behind a condemned criminal. The mention of his two sons indicates that they were known to the believers for whom the Book of Mark was written. This incident may have resulted in the salvation of Simon and his house,

2. Harold K. Moulton, ed., *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 5,35,39,143; also Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, pp. 5,26,82,1 85,345,346.

as disciples from Cyrene are noted later on in the Book of Acts.³

Simon's being forced to carry the cross was an extreme annoyance and indignity. He had plans of his own, and possibly family and friends waiting for him. The great Feast he had traveled so far to attend was suddenly denied him, for this act of carrying the instrument of death in a Roman execution made him ceremonially unclean for the Passover. Had Simon entered the city one hour sooner or later, his whole life may have turned out differently. Instead he encountered what seemed to be unfortunate humiliation and disgrace. In the end, however, this incident possibly turned out to be his gateway to life. The greatest changes in our lives often hinge on unplanned experiences.

It is commonly thought that Jesus, rather than Simon, carried his own cross. This misconception stems from misunderstanding a scripture in the Gospel of John.

John 19:16 and 17:

Then delivered he [Pilate] him [Jesus] therefore unto them [soldiers] to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

And he [Jesus] bearing [*bastazō*] his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.

3. Acts 11:20: "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."

The word *bastazō* means "to lift or carry" in the Greek. It is a totally different word from the one used when Simon was singled out to bear the wooden cross. *Bastazō* is never used in the Bible in reference to bearing a literal wooden cross.⁴ Therefore, if Simon bore the wooden cross, what was the cross that Jesus Christ bore? That cross was not a wooden cross; rather it was a spiritual cross composed of our sins, our transgressions, our sicknesses, the law, and everything that separated us from God. Isaiah 53 tells in part about the kind of cross Jesus Christ bore.

Isaiah 53:4-6:

Surely he hath borne our griefs [sicknesses], and carried our sorrows [pains]: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The Lord, Jehovah, "laid on him [Jesus Christ] the iniquity of us all." Jesus Christ bore our sicknesses and pain. These things make up the cross that he bore.

4. The word *bastazō* is used of carrying physical burdens as well as bearing judgment, the law and the sicknesses, mental burdens, and spiritual burdens of others. Biblically, its only use with the word "cross" is in a figurative usage (Luke 14:27) which will be shown.

Colossians 2:14:

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Jesus Christ blotted out “the handwriting of ordinances” that was against us and contrary to us, This is an Eastern expression. In the East, the name of a man who went bankrupt was posted at the gate of the city by the elders of that city, stating the names of his creditors and the amount of his debt. When all debts were completely paid, the elders would double the paper (Isaiah 40:2), folding together the writ of debts, so that all the debts were “blotted out.”⁵ (A partial payment of debts by the bankrupt person was unacceptable.) The folded-together document would then be nailed up at the city gate so that all passing by could see that the man’s debt was paid in full. All the negatives against that man were eradicated. Jesus Christ paid in full for all our debts of sin. He paid in full for our release from the bondage of the law. He was subjected to pain, sickness, suffering, and death for us. By taking these things upon himself, he “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. . . nailing it to his cross.”

II Corinthians 5:21:

For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] *to be* sin for us, who

5. Wierwille, “The Broken Body and the shed Blood,” *The Bible Tells Me So*, p. 89; also Wierwille, “Simon of Cyrene and the Cross Christ Bore,” *The Word’s Way*, pp. 219-2 34.

knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Matthew 8:16 and 17:

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare [*bastazō*] *our* sicknesses.

Notice that the Greek word *bastazō*, “to bear” in Matthew 8:17 is the same as in John 19:17, “And he [Jesus] bearing [*bastazō*] his cross went forth into a place called . . . Golgotha.” Some other interesting usages of *bastazō* are given below.

Galatians 6:2:

Bear [*bastazō*] ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

In bearing his spiritual cross for us, Jesus Christ was the prototype burden-bearer of all time. When we bear one another’s burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:17:

... for I bear [*bastazō*] in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

The “marks” are the brands of a bondsman.⁶ Paul was

6. In Eastern culture, a man would receive the brand or tattoo of a master upon becoming his bondsman. Similarly, in Old Testament law a Hebrew servant would have a small hole bored in his earlobe to signify his position as a permanent slave to that master. See Exodus 21:1-6.

saying he was a servant, a bondsman, of Jesus Christ his lord. His master was known by the manner in which Paul served him. This branded Paul as a burden-bearer.

Luke 14:26,27,33:

If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever doth not bear [*bastazō*] his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

This is the only time besides John 19:17 that *bastazō* is associated with a cross. Yet, once again, it is not a literal wooden cross. Here the phrase “bear his cross” involves a commitment, a willing acceptance of responsibility.⁷ A person could put nothing ahead of doing the will of his master; not friends, not family, not one’s own life could come before obedience to the master. That was the commitment required by Jesus to be his disciple. That was “bearing the cross.”

From studying these scriptures we can understand the expression in John 19:17 that says Jesus bore his cross.

7. The phrase “bear his cross” was a common expression at the time of Jesus for describing one’s taking on the responsibility of doing another’s will, even if it resulted in public humiliation or in giving priority to the master’s will over himself, family, or friends. Similar expressions are also found in Matthew 10:38, 16:24, Mark 8:34, 10:21, and Luke 9:23.

Jesus Christ had over twelve legions of angels at his command. He could have left this situation and gone on the offensive at any moment. So why did he go through with it? The answer is that Jesus Christ so loved us that he willingly laid down his life for us. He had to obediently subject his own will to that of his Father. For it is he that prayed three times, “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” He accepted his Father’s will and went through the greatest suffering in history. He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

I Corinthians 1:17 and 18:

For Christ sent me [Paul] not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Here we see another usage of the word “cross.” Paul was not making reference to the preaching of a wooden cross. Rather he utilized the word “cross” to stand for the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and the accomplishments of that death. This is known as the figure of speech *metalepsis*. When a person realizes what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross, he can enjoy the benefits of it. He can live without the sin, frustration, legalism, and sickness so prevalent in the world. That is how the accomplishments on that cross can be unto us “the power of God.” A wooden cross could never give us anything but death.

Galatians 6:14:

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

This cross which Paul gloried in was not the wooden cross on which Jesus died; rather, it stands for everything Jesus Christ accomplished for us by dying in our place. It stands for all that he bore for us. This cross stands for our release from the bondage of law, sin, sickness, and guilt. Truly that is something in which we can rejoice. This is the cross he bore for us. This is what his death accomplished. In this Paul could glory and say that by the Lord Jesus Christ “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Paul was alive in Christ, no longer walking in the bondage of the world. We no longer need to bear a cross of burden and pain; Jesus Christ bore it for us, We simply look at what he did and rejoice, glorying in the deliverance we now have.

We have covered three of the basic usages of the word “cross”: (1) the literal wooden cross which Simon of Cyrene carried and upon which Jesus Christ was crucified, (2) a figurative usage in which “bearing the cross” refers to voluntarily accepting and carrying out a responsibility given by one’s master, and (3) another figurative usage, *metalepsis*, in which the “cross” stands for the death of Christ, but rather than dwelling on its negative features, accentuates the accomplishments and atoning merits of that death.

The second and third usages must apply to John 19:17. Simon of Cyrene bore the wooden cross; Jesus Christ obeyed his Father and bore all our reproach, our judgment, our sin, our guilt, and our sickness. He accepted this responsibility. By bearing this spiritual cross⁸ for us, Jesus Christ made us completely, completely complete. He gave us victory over all the negatives of the world. What a savior!

While the soldiers took Jesus toward Calvary, with Simon carrying the wooden cross behind him, many significant events occurred.

Luke 23 :27-32:

And there followed [were following] him [Jesus] a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

8. Bishop K.C. Pillai cites an interesting Eastern custom of placing a small cross around the neck of a condemned man as a badge of shame. Jesus may have borne a cross such as this, which, from a spiritual point of view, represented the spiritual cross he bore in enduring his sufferings and crucifixion. K.C. Pillai, *Light Through an Eastern Window* (New York: Robert spellers & Sons, 1963), pp. 66-67.

For if they do these things in a green tree [i.e., with God's Son present to bless them], what shall be done in the dry [when their Messiah is no longer around]?

And there were also two other, malefactors [*kakourgoi*], led with him to be put to death.

It is overwhelming that Jesus Christ was in such control of his faculties that with boldness he still spoke God's Word. He was not seeking pity. As badly as he was physically beaten, Jesus Christ still wanted people to hear God's Word, even as he was being dragged toward his death.

Notice that here in Luke 23 God's Word plainly teaches that two malefactors, *duo kakourgoi* in Greek, were led with Jesus from the Praetorium. At this time only two were going with Jesus to be crucified. We will see later in this study that two others were also brought to Calvary after a period of time.⁹

Another significant incident happened on the way to Golgotha.

Mark 15:22 and 23:

And they [soldiers] bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

And they gave [were giving] him to drink wine [Greek: *oinos*, wine] mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

9. Wierwille, "The Four Crucified with Jesus," *The Word's Way*, pp. 235-247.

This is the first drink offered to Jesus during this ordeal. The Greek word for "bring" is *pherō*, meaning "to bear" or "to carry." It is in the present tense indicating they were still on their way to Golgotha. As the soldiers carried Jesus to Golgotha, they were continually pouring this drink on his lips. Such drinks were customarily offered to victims as an anesthetic to help deaden the pain. Yet Jesus did not receive the wine mingled with myrrh, choosing instead to bear the full pain and suffering. The second drink offered to Jesus is recorded in Matthew 27.

Matthew 27:33 and 34:

And when they were come [having come] unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

They gave him vinegar [Greek: *oxos*] to drink mingled with gall [Greek: *cholē*]: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

The Greek word for "were come" is *erchomai*. Here it is in the aorist tense indicating they had already attained the action, they had arrived at Golgotha. This drink is different from the one in Mark 15, for this one was given after they had reached Golgotha; the one in Mark was offered on the way. The word "vinegar" in verse 34 is *oxos* in Greek, meaning "vinegar-like"—cheap, very sour wine. This drink was mingled with gall (rather than the myrrh of Mark), also a bitter substance known to deaden pain. Jesus Christ tasted it and refused to

drink. Both the first and second drinks were offered and refused before he was put on the cross.

Matthew 27:35:

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Mark 15:24 and 25:

And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Luke 23:33 and 34:

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

John 19:23 and 24:

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Before crucifying Jesus and the two malefactors, the soldiers took off Jesus' clothing. They took off his outer

garment and ripped it into four parts, giving a part to each of the four soldiers standing guard at the crucifixion. These soldiers were there to prevent the victim from getting away and to deter friends from trying to rescue the convict. The word "coat" in John 19:23 is actually "tunic." The tunic was an undergarment that sometimes had sleeves and was usually knee-length. The tunic of Jesus was distinctive in that it was seamless. So rather than tearing the seamless tunic, the soldiers cast lots to see who would get it. This fulfilled the prophecy of Psalms 22:18.

In Luke 23:34, we read the often-quoted prayer by Jesus: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."¹⁰

The time of the crucifixion, as stated in Mark 15:25, was the third hour, about 9 A. M. At this time Jesus was put on the cross and the malefactors were crucified with him.

Luke 23:35-37:

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar [Greek: *oxos*, a cheap, sour wine],

And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews [Judeans], save thyself.

10. Significantly, this is omitted in Lachmann's Greek text, the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Bezae, Codex Vaticanus, the Sinaitic Palimpsest, and the Washingtonian Koridethai.

Once Jesus was on the cross, the rulers (probably some of the Sanhedrin and other religious leaders) began heckling him. Then the soldiers offered him a drink of cheap, sour wine—the third drink he was offered, this time after he was suspended on the cross. (The first two were offered before he was put on the cross.) God’s Word does not indicate whether or not there was any added painkiller like myrrh or gall in this wine, and there is no indication that Jesus received this third drink offered.

Matthew 27:36:

And sitting down they watched him there.

This “sitting down to watch” refers to the soldiers’ guarding the victim to make sure there is no escape or attempted rescue.

As the Gospel accounts proceed, we come to a controversial topic, involving the written accusation nailed on the cross over Jesus’ head.

Matthew 27:37:

And [they] set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS [JUDEANS].

Mark 15:26:

And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS [JUDEANS].

Luke 23:38:

And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS [JUDEANS].

According to Matthew 27, this accusation was set up over Jesus’ head after he had been placed on the cross, mocked, and watched for a period of time. It would be termed a “superscription” because of its position over his head. In Luke 23:38 the phrase “in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew” should be omitted according to most critical Greek texts and the oldest manuscripts in Estrangelo Aramaic.

In comparing the Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, as well as the four Gospels, it is evident that scribes introduced slight changes into the wordings of the written accusation over the years. However, by careful study it is possible to learn the essence of what this accusation said.

The words “THIS IS” in Luke 23:38 can be deleted, as they are omitted in some Greek manuscripts. Mark 15 and Luke 23 would then both read, “THE KING OF THE JEWS [JUDEANS] .” Matthew 27:37 added the words “THIS IS JESUS” by way of Scripture build-up. This part of the superscription was simply not recorded in Mark and Luke because it is not necessary for one’s understanding of the accusation. The Gospel of John says the following about the accusation.

John 19:19-22:

And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS [JUDEANS].

This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews [Judeans] ; but that he said, I am King of the Jews [Judeans].

Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

This section in John 19 is not strictly chronological. Unlike the other Gospels, it talks about the accusation before the parting of the garments. This is simply because it goes back to the actual writing of the accusation by Pilate and then deals topically with all the events associated with it. The other Gospels only describe the accusation and refer to the placement of it over his head.

The Gospel of John is the only Gospel which in both Greek and Aramaic manuscripts informs us that the inscription was written in three languages: Aramaic (called Hebrew in the King James Version), Greek, and Latin. The differences in the languages may also be involved in some of the differences among the wordings of the accusation recorded in the four Gospels.

When John 19:19 says Pilate wrote this title and put it on the cross, it is obvious that he ordered it to be written and put on the cross. Pilate himself did not do the actual writing or nailing.

There were several ways a written accusation could be displayed. The Gospel of Matthew indicated that it was

nailed above the head of Jesus. Customarily the accusation went with the condemned from his place of judgment to his place of crucifixion. The accusation was transported to his execution by a soldier carrying it before the convict to exhibit it to all onlookers. Some scholars believe accusations were etched into wood. More likely, however, they were thin placards smeared with white gypsum and then, with black letters, the name of the accused and his offense was written on the placard. This would make accusations readily visible and readable even from a distance. Once the victim was placed upon the cross, the accusation would be attached to the cross above him.¹¹

According to John 19:21 and 22, the Judeans wanted to change the written accusation, because to have a Galilean from Nazareth displayed as their king and being crucified could be embarrassing. The Judean religious leaders despised the Galileans, especially Jesus Christ. However, they could not change what Pilate had written. Neither Pilate nor his soldiers would allow it. If they had changed the title or put up a new one, they would have also added the qualifying words, "*He said I am King of the Judeans,*" as recorded in John 19:21. Pilate would not allow them to do this, stating emphatically, "What I have written I have written." Pilate would no longer allow himself to be pushed around.

11. *The New Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Crucifixion" and "Superscription," by D.H. Wheaton; also Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:590.

We have noted that all four Gospels refer to the same accusation. It is called a “superscription,” an “accusation,” and a “title.” Every Gospel states that it said, “THE KING OF THE JUDEANS,” *ho Basileus tōn Ioudaiōn*. Matthew and John tells us that the superscription included Jesus’ name. John tells us that it included the name of Jesus’ hometown, Nazareth. John also tells us it was written in three languages. And, after having the accusation written, Pilate refused to change the wording, ordering his soldiers to place it on the cross when Jesus was crucified. Thus, by careful study of the Gospel records and the variations in the extant Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, the most likely reading of the superscription was: THIS IS JESUS THE NAZARENE, KING OF THE JUDEANS.



The accusation was a mockery of both Jesus and the Judeans. It mocked Jesus by showing his claims of kingship juxtaposed with his hanging on a cross. Who could imagine a genuine king being executed as a criminal, looking so pitiful and powerless? The accusation further mocked the Judeans by giving them a king from Galilee, one who was crucified as a full demonstration of Roman authority over them.

Time and again, the mockers at the cross jeered at Jesus for claiming to be the king, the Messiah, the Son of God. Yet Jesus Christ could have summoned over twelve legions of angels and have been delivered from the situation. He endured this intense suffering and humiliation because he loved.

After the account of setting up the accusation on the cross, the Gospel of Luke records some interesting developments regarding the other men crucified with Jesus.

Luke 23:39-42:

And one of the malefactors [*kakourgoi*] which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

At this time only two malefactors had been crucified with Jesus. One of the two malefactors (Greek: *duo kakourgoi*) reviled Jesus as the bystanders had been doing. The other malefactor turned and reproved the first one, saying, in essence, “Be quiet! You’ve got your nerve since you’re being crucified too, especially since we deserve to be crucified and this man did nothing wrong.” Upon saying this, the second malefactor turned and asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom. Isn’t that amazing? This dying criminal believed Jesus was the Messiah. Look at Jesus’ response.

Luke 23:43:

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The translator of this verse made a grave error in punctuation. The comma after “thee” belongs after “today,” or it should be deleted since the original manuscripts had no punctuation. The words “shalt thou” should be reversed and read “thou shalt.” Paradise is always a place of perfection on earth. If we do not correct the translators’ errors as shown above, we will end up having Jesus and the malefactor in a perfect place on earth on the day of the crucifixion. That contradicts God’s Word because there is to be no paradise until God establishes a new heaven and a new earth, which is still future.¹² Thus, Luke 23:43 should

12. Wierwille, “The Third Heaven and Earth,” *The Word’s Way*, pp. 87-106.

read, “. - - Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.”³ That is the accuracy of God’s Word.

Now let’s consider the events that happened soon after this exchange of words between Jesus and the two malefactors.

Matthew 27:38:

Then [not before then] were there two thieves [Greek: *duo lēstai*, two robbers] crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another [the word another is “one”] on the left.

Mark 15:27 and 28:

And with him they crucify two thieves [*duo lēstai*, two robbers]; the one on his right hand, and the other [“other” is “one”] on his left.

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

The King James Version calls these two wrongdoers “thieves,” Actually the Greek word *lēstai* means “robber,” as does the Aramaic *lstya*. A robber was a blatant criminal who might use violence. In contrast, a thief was one who used stealth and who was not considered such a dangerous criminal. In Luke 23 we read of “two malefactors” or evildoers. Here in Matthew 27 and Mark 15 we read of “two robbers.” While every robber is a malefactor, an evildoer, there are many malefactors who are not robbers. Now, the question we

13. For further detailed study see Victor Paul Wierwille, *Are the Dead Alive Now?* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1971), pp. 77-84.

must ask is: are the malefactors of Luke 23 identical with the robbers of Matthew 27 and Mark 15? The answer is clearly no.

Luke 23:32 explicitly declared that the two malefactors were led out with Jesus and were crucified at the same time as he. Also in Luke 23:32-43 we saw that Jesus and the two malefactors were led to Calvary and crucified *before* any of the following incidents occurred: Jesus' garments were parted, he was reviled by the people, the superscription was placed above his head, and he was jeered at by one of the malefactors.

In Matthew 27:35-38 and Mark 15 :24-27, the two robbers are shown to have been brought after Jesus was put up on the cross, after the parting of the garments, after the guards sat to watch him, and after the placement of the superscription. Clearly the two malefactors and the two robbers were not identical. Thus, in total, four men were crucified with Jesus.

Matthew 27:39-44:

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

He trusted in God; let him [God] deliver him now, if he [God] will have him: for he [Jesus] said, I am the Son of God.

The thieves [robbers] also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth [notice that both robbers reviled Jesus].

Mark 15:29-32:

And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they ["they" refers to the "robbers" of verse 27] that were crucified with him reviled him.

In the Gospel of Luke we learned that only one of the malefactors reviled Jesus; the other one became a believer. Here in Matthew 27 and Mark 15 both robbers reviled Jesus. This is more evidence that the two robbers were different from the two malefactors. Concluding evidence is found in John 19: 18.

John 19:18:

Where [at Golgotha] they crucified him [Jesus], and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

This verse is not set chronologically. The context emphasizes the place of the crucifixion. The word "one"

in John 19:18 is omitted in *every* critical Greek text. It was added by translators simply because they assumed only two were crucified with Christ. In adding the word “one,” they manufactured a discrepancy in God’s Word. The phrase “on either side” is, in the Greek, *enteuthen kai enteuthen*. It means “on this side and on that side.” In Revelation 22:2, these same words are translated in the phrase “on either side of the river.” But here in John 19, the word *duo*, two, tells how many were on each side. Literally, from the Greek, John 19:18 reads, “Where him they crucified, and with him others, two on this side and on that side, and Jesus in the midst.” This is a tremendous truth from God’s Word.

To seal the accuracy of John 19:18, we should note the word “midst.” Grammatically, one person would be crucified “between” two; when more than two surround a person, he is in the “midst” of them.

By scrutinizing God’s Word and realizing that it must fit like a hand in a glove, we see the unsurpassed accuracy of the Word of God. How plainly God’s Word shows us that there were four crucified with Jesus, two malefactors and two robbers.¹⁴

14. At Ploubézéré near Lannion, in the Côtes-dû-Nord, Brittany, there is a representation at an early Christian shrine of Calvary with five crones. why would this old shrine have been built this way if there had only been two crucified with Jesus? The altar slab when consecrated in a Roman Catholic Church has five crosses cut into it: one cross is in the center and one cross is in each of the four corners. This has become a popular symbol known as “the Jerusalem cross.” Perhaps its origin may be traced to the four others crucified with Jesus. See *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 164, pp. 187-188; Donald T. Kauffman, *The Dictionary of Religious Terms* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1967), p. 262; and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1954, s.v. “Altar.”

While these five men hung suspended on their crosses, observe how the religious leaders and those passing by mocked Jesus as recorded in Matthew 27. Even when their enemy Jesus was a beaten, dying man, they would not relent in their verbal pummeling of him. They jeered at him, saying he should walk right off the cross if he were God’s Son. Little did they understand that it was Jesus’ obedience to God that kept him from doing just that.

Matthew 27:45:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Mark 15:33:

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Luke 23:44 and 45:

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened....

As we reckon time, the earth was dark from about noon to 3 P.M. Around the time of the ninth hour, about 3 P.M., several things happened that are very intriguing and spiritually significant. To see this we must look at one of the least understood records in God’s Word.

Matthew 27:46:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,

saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mark 15:34:

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

These two verses from Matthew 27 and Mark 15, as translated in the King James' Version, indicate a cry of defeat and as such have misled well-meaning people for hundreds of years. By this time Jesus had gone through nearly forty hours of interrogation, mockery, beatings, and suffering, all without so much as murmuring one complaint. Yet now it would appear that he, in a loud voice, accused God of deserting him.

That God forsook Jesus has been explained by the rationale that Jesus became sin and God could not tolerate sin; consequently, God left Jesus to die alone. This idea contradicts every other pertinent scripture in the Word of God.

Matthew 27:46, as well as the same record in Mark 15:34, should have caught our attention from the beginning. Why did the translators leave those foreign words in the verse? This deviation from normal translation procedures should have caused us to wonder and question.

To see exactly what God's Word does say, we need to do some background study. Look at the Gospel of John where Jesus had spoken earlier to his apostles.

John 16:32:

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

In this statement, Jesus was referring to the time of his crucifixion and of his death. Of that time of suffering, Jesus said, "The Father is with me." Yet Matthew 27:46 says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

John 10:30 testifies, "I and *my* Father are one." II Corinthians 5:19 says, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. . . ." In purpose, God and Jesus Christ were totally united. John 8:29 says Jesus Christ always did those things that pleased God. Would a loving father forsake an obedient son in an hour of need? God indeed was with Jesus Christ while he was dying on the cross.

We read previously in Matthew 26 what Jesus said at the time he was taken captive.

Matthew 26:53:

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions [twelve legions equals 72,000] of angels?

A person has to be in good standing with God to get that kind of assistance. Jesus' Father would have given him over 72,000 angels. Jesus could have walked right out of the situation should he have so desired. Why? Because "I and *my* Father are one," "the Father is

with me,” “I do always the things that please him.” If Jesus Christ was always doing the Father’s will, he must have been doing his Father’s will when he was dying upon the cross. Yet Matthew 27:46 says, “Jesus cried with a loud voice, *saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This verse clearly contradicts the rest of God’s Word.

So how do we make sense of all this? First of all, the foreign words in verse 46 of Matthew 27 are not Greek words, they are Aramaic. Jesus spoke Aramaic.¹⁵ These Aramaic words show up in this particular scripture because the translators were not absolutely certain about their meaning. When Jesus’ words were translated into Greek, the translators let the Aramaic words remain and then added what they thought the Greek translation might be. Later the King James translators, when translating from the Greek manuscripts, simply translated the Greek and left the Aramaic words in the text.¹⁶

Let’s carefully study Matthew 27:46 to learn exactly what it says. According to all Aramaic sources, the word *lama* is actually *imna*. *Lmna* is used as a declaration of “for this purpose” or “for this reason.” The root of *sabachthani* (or *shbqthni*) is *shbq*. *Shbq* means “to

15. Aramaic is called Hebrew in the King James Version, because it was the language spoken by the Hebrew people. Aramaic and Hebrew are closely related Semitic languages.

16. There are other examples in the New Testament where the translators have allowed the Aramaic words to remain: Matthew 5:22, Mark 5:41, I Corinthians 16:22.

spare, to leave, to reserve, or to keep.” The word “reserved” found in Romans 11:4 is, in the Aramaic, from the root word *shbq*. Since this is a quote from I Kings 19:18, the word *shaar* in the Old Testament text is the Hebrew counterpart of the Aramaic *shbq* in this case.

Romans 11:4:

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved [*shbq*] to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baa!*.

I Kings 19:18:

Yet I have left [Hebrew: *shaar*] *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baa!, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Romans 11:4 is a quotation of I Kings 19:18. The word “left” in I Kings 19:18 is the word “reserved” in Romans 11:4, where it is taken from the Aramaic word *shbq*. *Shbq* is translated “remaining” in the following three scriptures.

II Kings 10:11:

So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining [*shbq*].

Deuteronomy 3:3:

So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining [*shbq*].

Joshua 10:33:

Then Horem king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and

Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining [*shbq*].

This, along with the other scriptures revealing that God remained with Jesus, shows that *shbq* does not mean “to forsake” in Matthew 27:46. Rather it means “to reserve,” “to spare,” or “to leave remaining.” Going back to Matthew 27, the time was approaching the ninth hour, three o’clock in the afternoon, when Jesus spoke from the cross. Hanging on the cross at that critical hour, Jesus came forth with this utterance from the depth of his soul, “*Eli, Eli, imna shbqthni?*” that is to say, My God, my God, for this purpose I was spared” or “My God, my God, for this purpose was I reserved.”

Soon after this, Jesus uttered the words, “It is finished.” What was finished? The work God had laid before His Son. Jesus Christ had given his own life and paid the price, he had borne his spiritual cross. He who knew no sin had become sin so that you and I might become the righteousness of God in him.” His sacrifice for us as the Passover lamb was finished. The soldiers and accusers did not take his life. It was not the nails driven through his hands that held him to the cross, not the nails driven through his feet. He could have come off that cross at any moment for he had over twelve legions of angels at his command. Do you know why

17. II Corinthians 5:21: “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Jesus kept hanging on that cross? Jesus stayed on the cross for he so loved that he gave his own life for man’s redemption. Under these circumstances do you think God would desert His only-begotten Son?

Suppose you had an only son and right now your son was dying. Would you be reading this book on Jesus’ life or would you be with your son? The answer is obvious. You would be with your son. And yet, your son has sinned; he has done things contrary to your will. Still you would want to be with him. Do you think that God Almighty is less caring for His Son than you are? Jesus Christ was God’s only-begotten Son; Jesus always did the Father’s will. When he was dying upon the cross, whose will was he doing? The Father’s. Where do you think the Father was? With him.

When Jesus was dying upon the cross, he did not cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” but rather, “My God, my God, for this purpose was I spared, for this purpose was I kept, for this purpose came I into the world, for this purpose was I reserved.”¹⁸

18. Dr. George Lamsa, whose native tongue was Aramaic, translated Matthew 27:46 from Aramaic into English as “My God, My God, for this I was kept.” George M. Lamsa, trans., *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts* (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Co., 1957). For further discussion, see George M. Lamsa, *Gospel Light*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Co., 1936), pp. 151-155; also George M. Lamsa, *More Light on the Gospel* (San Antonio, Tex.: Aramaic Bible Center, 1968), pp. 80-86. That the Aramaic texts are original and were wrongly translated here into the Greek is substantiated by the fact that Aramaic manuscripts do not include the last part of the verse which says “. . . that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This latter part is left out in Matthew and Mark in two old Aramaic sources, the Sinaitic Palimpsest, and the Curetonian Syriac. The translators of the Greek texts added this last phrase and also left the Aramaic in because they were not sure how to handle it.

Now we have an accurate translation of Matthew 27:46, one of the most commonly mistranslated verses of scripture in the King James Version. Now, accurately translated, this verse harmonizes with the other passages in the Word of God.

God stayed with His Son. This was not only *their* triumphant hour, but ours also, for it was at this point that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, fulfilled the legal requirements for our redemption and salvation. This was Jesus Christ's purpose for coming into the world. This was his cry of triumph.

Evidently, this cry caused as much confusion to the listeners there at the cross that day as it has to readers since then.

Matthew 27:47:

Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

Mark 15:35:

And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

These are very informative verses if looked at with spiritual understanding. "Elias" is the Greek rendering of "Elijah," one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. In Malachi 4:5, one of the last verses of the Old Testament, God declared that He would send Elijah before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." God

was here figuratively speaking of John the Baptist, as Jesus so plainly showed his disciples.⁹

However, during the four hundred or so years from the Prophet Malachi to Jesus Christ, many pagan beliefs influenced Judaism. One of these beliefs was reincarnation. Thus, the meaning of Malachi's prophecy had become corrupted and people began believing that Elijah would be reincarnated and literally return. This concept is totally contrary to God's Word which declares that the dead will remain dead until Christ returns to resurrect them. Reincarnation is totally contradictory to God's Truth. If you remember, some people even believed that Jesus Christ was either Elijah or John the Baptist or another of the prophets reincarnated.²⁰ That is how doctrinally corrupt Judaism had become by the time of Jesus Christ.

In looking at Matthew 27:46 and 47, we can now understand the confusion. When Jesus said, "Eli," the onlookers thought he said the Aramaic word for Elijah. They thought Jesus was calling for a reincarnated Elijah to come and rescue him from the cross. Because of their

19. Matthew 17:10-13: "And his disciples asked him, saying, why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

20. Matthew 16:13 and 14: "when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

corrupt religion, they misunderstood his words and missed out on one of the greatest cries of all times.

Matthew 27:48 and 49:

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge [Greek: *spongos*], and filled *it* with vinegar [cheap, sour wine in both Greek and Aramaic], and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias [Elijah] will come to save him.

Mark 15:36:

And one ran and filled a sponge [*spongos*] full of vinegar [cheap, sour wine in both Greek and Aramaic], and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying [Aramaic reads, “they said”], Let alone; let us see whether Elias [Elijah] will come to take him down.

This was the fourth drink offered to Jesus Christ. The wine was a cheap, sour wine offered on a sponge and stuck on the end of a reed. This was held up to Jesus. There is, again, no indication that he accepted it. With the offering of this drink came the comment, “Leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.” The jeering beholders were sure Jesus had called for Elijah.

Included among the events occurring while Jesus was hanging on the cross, at a time not exactly specified, are instructions Jesus gave to some people he dearly loved. This information is given in John 19.

John 19:25-27:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home* [the word “home” is incorrectly supplied].

Sometime during the agonizing hours on the cross, Jesus looked and saw his mother standing close by. Also standing by was the disciple whom he loved, perhaps Lazarus of Bethany. Referring to this disciple, Jesus told his mother Mary, “Behold thy son.” Jesus was telling her, “I’m dying. From now on he will be to you as a son.” Then Jesus looked at the disciple whom he dearly loved and said, “Behold thy mother.” In other words, “You treat her as your mother; see that she is well provided for.” What a tender, loving gesture by Jesus Christ at a time of intense pain. He was still concerned about others and wanted to meet their needs.

Sometime after this, very near his death, Jesus Christ expressed his desire for a drink with the simple statement, “I thirst.”

John 19:28-30:

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that [so that] the scripture might be [was] fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar [cheap, sour wine]: and they filled a sponge [*spongōs*] with vinegar [cheap, sour wine], and put *it* [the wine] upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received [*lambantō*] the vinegar [cheap, sour wine]...

Psalms 69:21 says, "...and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." He had already been offered and refused four drinks. Now finally he requested a drink. The context indicates that this request was made to his family and close friends standing nearby. One of them responded and utilized hyssop to offer this fifth drink to him. This use of hyssop is a throwback to the first Passover when the children of Israel were to dip hyssop in the sacrificial blood and then use it to sprinkle the blood across the doorposts and lintels of their houses. According to Exodus 12:3 and 4, that first Passover was to be observed by individual families and close friends. Here at the sacrifice of the true and final Passover lamb, hyssop, family, and friends are again involved.

Verse 29 of John 19 has been misread to say the sponge was attached to the hyssop. That is very doubtful because hyssop is not a firm stick that could support a sponge. They filled the sponge with the wine and then used the sponge to squeeze the wine onto the hyssop. The hyssop's thick, hairy leaves and branches can be made into a bunch that holds moisture very well.

Hyssop tied with a scarlet cord to a cedar handle was used in purification ceremonies of the Old Testament.²¹

Hyssop has long been known for its value in healing and purifying. Besides Passover, hyssop was also used in the Old Testament in the cleansing of a healed leper and of a house delivered from plague and was to be used in the cleansing of anyone who had been in contact with a dead body. Psalms 51:7 says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. . . ." It was used by Moses in sprinkling blood on the book of the covenant before all the people. Only this fifth drink did Jesus request and accept.

It is interesting that, Biblically speaking, the number five signifies grace. All of these details are meaningful when we consider the words of John 19:28: "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." Immediately after drinking, Jesus said, "It is finished."

Matthew 27:50:

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,.,

Mark 15:37:

And Jesus cried with a loud voice...

Luke 23:46:

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice...

21. Hebrews 9:19 and 20: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Also see Exodus 24:6,8; Numbers 19:6,17,18; Leviticus 14:1,7,48-52.

John 19:30:

... he said, It is finished. ...

Of all the words from the cross that are recorded, the words “It is finished” are the only ones that could be the loud cry referred to above. Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not say what the words were that he cried with a loud voice. But in all three Gospels this cry is placed very close to his death. Knowing this, it is clear that, if the words of this cry are recorded, they must be the words found in John 19 at a time very close to his death. The only words that fit this timing are the words, “It is finished.” What was finished? The complete Passover—once and for all. The perfect lamb of God known and prepared for since the foundation of the world. He had come and finished the work he came to do.

Jesus Christ’s first recorded words as he was growing up included, “Know ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” From the beginning to the end his life was committed to the work to which God had called him. This sense of calling is demonstrated shortly before he took his disciples to the garden where he was apprehended. Jesus Christ prayed to his heavenly Father, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John.

John 17:4:

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gayest me to do.

Finally, just before dying on the cross, he declared with a loud cry that it was finished. He had accomplished the business that God his Father had sent him to do. But these words “It is finished” were not his final words.

Luke 23:46:

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend [give] my spirit.

With these great words Jesus Christ gave his spirit back to God and entrusted all to Him.

Luke 23:46:

... and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Matthew 27:50:

... yielded up the ghost.

Mark 15:37:

... and gave up the ghost.

John 19:30:

... and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The Son of God was dead. The phrase “gave up the ghost” indicates that he willingly gave up his life. No one took it from him; he laid it down. He did not die until the time when all was fulfilled. But when all his work for the complete fulfillment of God’s righteous redemption of mankind was finished, he bowed his head and died. He breathed his last breath of soul life and the

spirit that God had put upon him returned to God who had given it.

About forty hours after his arrest, including prolonged periods of unspeakable physical and mental torture, including six excruciating hours of hanging on the cross, Jesus Christ gave up his life for you and for me. He died about the ninth hour, 3 P.M., the hour the Passover lamb was to be slain.

Matthew 27:51:

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

Mark 15:38:

And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Luke 23:45:

... and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.²²

At the time of Jesus' death, even the physical environment reverberated with the effects of that death. The veil in the Temple, a very heavy linen curtain embroidered with spun gold, was torn from top to bottom. This veil formed the entrance to the Holy of Holies, the most sacred and the innermost part of the Temple. The Holy of Holies represented the presence of God with Israel. Only once a year could anyone enter it, and that

22. Luke places the rending of the veil just before Jesus' death. The others place it just afterwards. The two events were virtually simultaneous. However, only one detail can be recorded at a time, hence we have the variation in order.

was on the Day of Atonement when the high priest alone, after a period of cleansing, would enter into it through the veil. Only he could enter into God's presence. There he, as the representative of Israel, would intercede with God for Israel. For this reason the veil represented the separation between God and Israel. At the moment of Jesus Christ's death, this separation was done away with. Ephesians teaches us that his death also abolished the separation between the Gentiles and God.²³

The tearing of the Temple veil from top to bottom demonstrated that it was God's work in Christ which abolished this separation between Israel and God. God had been in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Man could not work his way into God's presence. So God was reaching down to man, giving free access of Himself to man. Since the death of Jesus and the tearing of the Temple veil, every believer has access to the presence of God.

In addition to the great significance of the ripped Temple veil at the time of Jesus' death, there was also a great earthquake, Rocks were torn loose and there was a great shaking of the earth. Alarm struck the hearts of those nearby.²⁴

23. Ephesians 2:12 and 14: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*."

24. Matthew 27:52 and 53 are clearly added by scribes. Manuscript 354 in Venice, Italy, omits these verses. Though other textual documentation for this has not yet been found, it must be realized that the earliest manuscript including this section of Matthew 27 dates from the fourth century

Matthew 27:54:

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

Mark 15:39:

And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Luke 23:47 and 48:

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

The earthquake²⁵ was so astounding that the Roman centurion in charge of the soldiers guarding the crosses at Calvary was convinced by this that Jesus was in truth the Son of God. There were four other men on crosses, yet the centurion said nothing of them. Others nearby began beating their breasts, expressing great awe and

A.D. These verses must be an addition since they are contradictory to other scriptures which teach us that the dead are dead and will remain so until Christ returns. Until that time, only Christ has been raised bodily from death unto everlasting life. Textual critics as well as marginal notes in other old manuscripts have recognized these verses as later interpolations. The phrase "after his resurrection" in Matthew 27:53 demonstrates the passage is totally out of context, obviously a scribal addition.

25. There are four independent testimonies (outside of God's Word) which refer to a catastrophe in the Temple area at this time, This catastrophe was taken to signify the impending destruction of the Temple. The sources are Josephus, the Talmud, Tacitus, and early Christian tradition. Josephus refers to a "quaking" and "a great noise." see Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:610; Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.5.3; and Whiston, *Josephus: Complete Works*, p. 582.

concern at Jesus' death and the subsequent events. The synchronization of the earthquake with the Son of God's death was a powerful sign to Israel and to everyone else present.

Meanwhile, faithful followers stood by, observing this dramatic course of events, for they were determined to take care of their beloved master as best as circumstances would allow.

Matthew 27:55 and 56:

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses and the mother of Zebedee's children.

Mark 15:40 and 41:

There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

(Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him into Jerusalem.

Luke 23:49:

And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

While God's Word does not specifically name any men present at the crucifixion, it does take special note of the women who were there. It is remarkable that while most of the disciples had scattered, these faithful

women remained with Jesus even up to the time of his burial by Joseph of Arimathea.

Chronologically, the record now brings us to the removal of the corpse from the cross and the burial of our lord's body. The Judeans became anxious about disposing of the crucified men's bodies, since the special Sabbath of the Feast was rapidly approaching. They wanted the victims off the crosses and taken away before sunset at which time the important Feast began. The record of this is in John 19.

John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

The Greek word for "cross" is *stauros*, meaning "an upright pale or stake."²⁶ The Bible further describes the cross as a tree.²⁷ The cross on which Jesus died was simply a tree trunk stripped of its branches and placed in a hole in the ground.

In crucifixion, the victim's hands were nailed above his head. Normally the feet were nailed to the cross also.

26. W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 4 vols. in 1 (1940; reprint ed., Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1940), 1:256,257.

27. Acts 10:39: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

I Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

When the body was suspended in this fashion breathing could be difficult and the muscles and tendons were painfully strained. The wounds from the nails and previous torture would add to the excruciating pain. Still a man could survive an extended period if left alone. So in order to bring about death more quickly, the soldiers would break the men's legs.

Breaking the legs of the victims was done by soldiers using a club or hammer. Such blows would cause internal blood loss which would bring about the victim's death quite rapidly. Without the support of the legs, the person's breathing would be further inhibited. The breaking of the legs was customarily accompanied by piercing the victim's side with a spear. These procedures hastened and assured the victim's death.²⁸

The Judeans asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken in order to hasten their deaths. They wanted the victims off the crosses and taken away before sunset at which time the important Feast began. That first day of the Feast was a special Sabbath. When Jesus died, it was still the time of preparation, as John 19:3 1 so clearly declares.

John 19:32 and 33:

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

28. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:613; *The New Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Crucifixion," by D.H. Wheaton.

The traditional picture of Calvary has had Jesus on the center cross with only one cross on each side of him. If that were true, the soldiers must have broken the legs of the first criminal, then, ignoring Jesus on the center cross, they must have passed by him and gone on to break the legs of the other criminal. The soldiers would then have had to return to Jesus on the center cross. That is totally illogical. People have not scrutinized God's Word to see its simplicity; instead they have complicated it by trying to manipulate the Word to fit erroneous traditions. Previously we studied and saw that four were crucified with Jesus: two malefactors were led out and crucified with him; later, after the parting of the garments and several other incidents, two robbers were brought out and crucified with him. Therefore, five crosses were erected. Jesus was in the midst on the center cross. One malefactor was on the cross to his immediate right and the other to his immediate left. Then the robbers were set on the crosses at each end, outside the malefactors: one robber to Jesus' left and the other to his right. Now it is very simple to see what occurred according to John 19:32 and 33.

The soldiers first went to a robber at the end of the row and broke his legs. Then they came to the second victim in the line of crosses, a malefactor. The malefactor had been crucified at the same time Jesus had been. He also was closer to Jesus than the robber. That is why the malefactor is described as "the other which was crucified with him." After breaking the legs of these two victims,

the soldiers proceeded to the third cross in line, Jesus' cross. No reference is made to the two victims on the remaining two crosses because the focus of the passage is on the soldiers' coming to break the legs of Jesus. This is how logically God's Word fits.

The soldiers did not foolishly run around the center cross and then come back to it. The soldiers broke the legs of a robber and then those of one of the malefactors; Jesus was next in line. Since Jesus was already dead, they did not break his legs. God had instructed in the Old Testament that no bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken.²⁹ For Jesus Christ to be our Passover lamb, the same had to be true of him. He laid down his life at exactly the appropriate moment, the time the Passover lamb was to die. Not only was it the proper time for the death of the lamb of God, but had Jesus Christ remained alive any longer, the soldiers would have broken his legs. Words cannot adequately express the exactness of God's timetable and the beauty with which God's Word sets this so accurately.

John 19:34:

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

29. Exodus 12:46: "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."

Numbers 9:12: "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it."

Jesus was already dead and the soldiers knew it. Although they did not break Jesus' legs, they did pierce his side so that blood and water flowed from it. If a soldier's spear were to pierce the victim's side from below, it could penetrate the stomach and the heart, gravity then causing water from the stomach and blood from the heart to flow out through the wound.³⁰ This fits the description found in God's Word.

John 19:35-37:

And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

So while no bone of Jesus' body was broken, his side was indeed pierced. In so many ways the Scriptures of old made known the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ fulfilled every scriptural requirement as the Messiah and the Passover lamb, even to the last detail of his death.

30. Some have suggested that Jesus physically died of heart rupture, but their evidence is not sufficiently conclusive. see Howard A. Matzke, "An Anatomist Looks at the Physical sufferings of Our Lord," *The Lutheran Witness*, 21 February 1961, pp. 6-7; Don A. Falkenberg, *The Wounds of Christ* (Columbus, Ohio: Bible Literature International, n.d.); William Stroud, *A Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* (London: Hamilton and Adams, 1847).

After his death follows the record of Jesus' burial. In studying the four Gospel accounts of the burial of Jesus, we will see that each Gospel tells part of the story. But only when all four Gospels are put together does one get a total view of the interesting and intricate activities involved in the burial of Jesus. For example, what John told in his record is not identical to what Matthew, Mark, and Luke told; yet there is no contradiction among them when the Word of God is rightly divided, noting carefully the time, the place of action, and the persons involved.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are the two active participants in burying Jesus. Except for Jesus' burial, Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in no other Biblical record. Nicodemus is mentioned in only two other places, John 3 and John 7. As we shall see, each man worked independently of the other, one with the idea that Jesus was temporarily dead, and the other believing that Jesus was to remain in his lifeless condition. Some of the women also desired to carry out certain burial customs for their dead master, but they were not able to do so because of time factors and the guards that were placed at the sepulchre.

Let us study the burial of Jesus by going through each Gospel beginning with Matthew.

Matthew 27:57:

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple.

The word “even” signifies that sunset was near. The words “a rich man” show that Joseph was abounding in riches. He was a very wealthy man who lived in Arimathea, approximately twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. Being “Jesus’ disciple” means that he was technically discipled to Jesus, a pupil of Jesus, a student convinced because of his own searching.

Matthew 27:58:

He [Joseph of Arimathea] went to Pilate, and begged [requested] the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

Remember that Joseph was a Judean, while Pilate was a Gentile. Entering into the court of a Gentile to request the body of Jesus made Joseph ceremonially unclean to eat the Passover.³¹ Touching the dead body of Jesus would also make him unclean by Old Testament law.³² Ignoring these legalities, Joseph earnestly appealed to Pilate to give him Jesus’ body. Certainly, even under normal circumstances, no prestigious person would ask for a criminal’s body; he would try to disassociate himself from the disgraced person. Yet Joseph went to Pilate’s hall earnestly requesting from Pilate the body of Jesus. How Joseph must have loved and respected Jesus, for in asking for Jesus’ body he defied all other priorities.

31. For this reason, the rulers of the synagogue would not enter Pilate’s judgment hall when they brought Jesus to him the preceding day. John 18:28: “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves [the rulers, scribes, and Pharisees] went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.”

32. See Appendix 1, “The Preparations for the Feast.”

Matthew 27:59:

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it [the body] in a clean linen cloth.

Notice that in Matthew 27 no mention is made of Nicodemus’ aiding Joseph in any way. It was Joseph of Arimathea who, after Pilate commanded the body to be delivered, took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. The words “wrapped it” mean “rolled it up in,” which shows that Joseph did not wind Jesus’ trunk, head, and limbs in a burial fashion. To demonstrate this further, the word for “linen cloth” is the Greek word *sindōn*. This clean “linen cloth” was not the normal grave wrapping, for which an entirely different Greek word is used. The linen cloth in which Joseph rolled up the body of Jesus was a sheet of material which could be wrapped around any body, not necessarily a dead body.

Matthew 27:60:

And [Joseph of Arimathea] laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out [which was hewn] in the rock: and he [they] rolled a great stone to [Aramaic and Greek say “upon”] the door [the opening] of the sepulchre, and [they] departed.

One question which this verse provokes is why should Joseph of Arimathea have a tomb or a sepulchre in Jerusalem next to the place where criminals were executed? After all, Joseph was from Arimathea, a town twenty-five miles away. This just doesn’t make

sense unless we accept the idea that this particular sepulchre was a memorial specifically prepared by Joseph of Arimathea at this accessible location so that it might be the burying place or tomb for Jesus.

The word for “had hewn” in verse 60, in contrast to “had taken” in verse 59, is in the passive voice in the Aramaic text, indicating that Joseph previously had had someone hew out the memorial; he himself did not hew it out. As a wealthy man, he could have had his servants hew it out. Verse 60 then notes that Joseph and his servants (the Aramaic reads “they”) rolled the “great stone” upon or over the opening of the sepulchre and departed. Notice that there was no anointing, there were no spices used, there was no wrapping in grave clothes.

Matthew 27:61:

And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

The word “against” means “on the opposite side of, away from, in front of, or facing.” The women who were present observed everything that was done by Joseph of Arimathea, including the fact he was not burying Jesus according to Judean custom. Why did Joseph not anoint him with spices and wrap him in the burial clothing? All the actions of Joseph of Arimathea indicate that normal burial rites were unnecessary, for he believed Jesus Christ would not remain dead, but

rise again as he had promised. As a disciple, Joseph was not simply a casual pupil of Jesus, but a convinced follower.

After the Matthew 27 account, the next record in the Bible regarding the burial of Jesus is found in Mark 15:42-47.

Mark 15:42:

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day [omit “the day”] before the sabbath.

The word “even” is the same word used in Matthew 27:57, referring to sometime in the late afternoon, approaching sunset. This verse directly informs us that the day on which Jesus Christ died was during the preparation, which included the fourteenth of Nisan, the day before the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The fifteenth of Nisan was always a Sabbath, the “high day” of John 19:31. In the year Christ died, it did not fall on the regular weekly Sabbath.

Mark 15:43:

Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved [asked for] the body of Jesus.

This record tells us more about Joseph; namely, that he was “an honourable counsellor,” that is, he was a member of the council, the Sanhedrin, the ruling body

of the Judeans in Jerusalem. He was also waiting for the Kingdom of God.

Mark 15:44:

And Pilate marvelled [questioned with surprise] if he [Jesus] were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

Pilate could not believe Joseph's words that Jesus was truly dead, so Pilate sought confirmation from the centurion. The boldness of Joseph of Arimathea in every record is most impressive. Mark 14:50 says regarding the disciples at the scene of Jesus' arrest, "And they all forsook him, and fled." Yet Joseph was bold. He was not one of the twelve apostles, but he was one who literally believed Jesus. The apostles may have been more closely associated with Jesus, but under the adversity of this critical time the majority of them fled. In contrast, Joseph took deliberate, courageous action to obtain the body of Jesus.

Mark 15:45 and 46:

And when he [Pilate] knew *it* [that Jesus was dead] of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

And he [Joseph] bought ["having bought" in Greek] fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto [upon] the door of the sepulchre.

Note that Joseph had already deliberately purchased for this person who was very special to him a new

wrapping or sheet which here again is called "fine linen," *sindōn*—the same word that is found in Matthew 27. Verse 46 also tells us that Joseph took Jesus' body down from the cross. The word for "wrapped him" is again the same word as "rolled him up in." He did not put the body in grave wrappings, nor did he anoint the body with the oils and spices customarily used in burial; rather he employed a fine linen material made for general use.

Mark 15:47:

And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Josès beheld where he was laid.

Once more there is no mention whatsoever in this Gospel of the presence of Nicodemus, although Mark 15 again states that the women beheld where Jesus was laid.

The next record regarding Joseph's burial of Jesus is in Luke 23:50-56.

Luke 23:50:

And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just.

The word "good" used here means that he was worthy to be admired, a person to be looked up to and emulated.

Luke 23 :51:

(The same had not consented to [had not agreed to] the

counsel and deed of them;) *he was* of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

These verses in Luke 23 give more personal information about Joseph than does Matthew or Mark. Joseph was not only a member of the Council, the Sanhedrin, but also he did not agree with their advice or their actions. He had not consented to their treatment of Jesus.

Luke 23:52 and 53:

This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged [asked for] the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Luke 23 gives the same description as in the two previous Gospels, of Joseph's asking Jesus' body of Pilate, his removing that body from the cross, and then wrapping and laying it in a newly hewn sepulchre. Again the word *sindōn* is used for "linen,"

Luke 23:54:

And that day was the preparation [literally, "And it was a thy of preparation"], and the sabbath drew on.

The day once more is noted as a day of preparation. It was still the fourteenth of Nisan, nearing the special Sabbath though sunset had not yet come.

Luke 23:55:

And the women also, which came with him (Jesus) from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how ["the manner in which" according to Aramaic] his body was laid.

These women can be identified from Mark 15:40 and 41 as being "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome" as well as "many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem." These women came from Galilee and followed Joseph as he removed Jesus' body from the cross and brought it to the garden. They beheld the sepulchre and "how his body was laid." In other words, they observed exactly what Joseph of Arimathea had done. He had simply wrapped Jesus in a *sindōn* without properly anointing his body with spices and oils according to religious burial customs. Because the women saw that Joseph of Arimathea did not give Jesus' body the proper rites, they set about to make arrangements to do so themselves.

Luke 23:56:

And they [the women] . . . prepared spices and ointments. . . .

Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23 concur that it was Joseph of Arimathea who took the body of Jesus down from the cross after Pilate had given him permission to do so. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth, a *sindōn*, and laid it in his own sepulchre without

regard to the traditional burial procedure. The women observed his actions and later made preparations to give Jesus' body the correct customary treatment, Nicodemus has yet to be involved or even mentioned.

In the Gospel of John's account of Joseph's activities, we find some interesting added truths which do not contradict but, rather, enlarge upon that which the other three Gospels relate.

John 19:38:

And after this [after the soldiers found Jesus dead and pierced his side but did not break his legs] Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus" is the same information as recorded in the other three Gospels. But then comes a statement which the other Gospels did not tell, namely, "but secretly for fear of the Jews." The word "secretly" would lead one to think that Joseph was afraid of what would happen to him if the Judeans found out about his activities. This is certainly contradictory to Joseph's boldness expressed in the other passages.

The word translated "secretly" in John 19:38 is the Greek verb *kruptō*, which means "hidden." Therefore the verse should read, "After this Joseph of Arimathea being a convinced follower, an earnest student or disciple of Jesus, but hidden for fear of the Judeans. . . ."

He was hidden during the crucifixion events. So to fit Mark 15:43, when Joseph came boldly to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus, with John 19:38, when Joseph hid away for fear of the Judeans, we should note that Joseph of Arimathea apparently was not afraid of what might happen to him eventually; but he was concealed for the duration of the crucifixion because he wanted to be sure not only to be able to see what was going on, but also to stay alive to boldly claim the body of Jesus upon death.

Before this, Jesus' enemies had been around the cross mocking him. Joseph hid himself nearby. Undoubtedly, many of the Sanhedrin would be aware of Joseph's association with Jesus. Thus, rather than risk harassment that would have prevented him from claiming the body, Joseph hid himself until Jesus was dead and he could safely claim and bury the body.

Joseph obviously believed that Jesus was going to die and was aware of the place and other details involved. Therefore he chose a place in a garden close to the crucifixion site. There he had a sepulchre hewn out of the rock. Certainly Joseph would never have done this had he not believed what Jesus told him concerning his death.

From the other Gospels we learned that Joseph was given permission to take the body, that he gave it a very simple burial, and then left. We also learned that the women watched Joseph's actions and then left, intend-

ing to return and bury the body according to custom. Now John 19 brings in the second participant in the burial of Jesus' body.

John 19:39:

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

Until this verse Nicodemus has not been mentioned in any of the Gospel records. The Gospel of John relates that Joseph acquired the body. However, John does not tell of Joseph's burial of the body, which is fully elucidated in the other accounts. So we know that Nicodemus had to have come to the sepulchre after Joseph had buried Jesus and departed. The added note "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night . . ." identifies Nicodemus as being the same man as told of in John 3 and John 7. The first mention of spices in any of the Gospel records of Jesus' burial is when Nicodemus came and "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes" for a proper burial of the body. When John 19 tells what Nicodemus did, it is understood that Nicodemus was aided by his servants. As a ruler of the Judeans, Nicodemus was a wealthy man with servants who are here accompanying him. Quite often God's Word, by the figure of speech *synecdoche*, will utilize one man's name to include with him those under him.³³

33. This type of *synecdoche* puts the part for the whole. Here it was one man's name to stand for a group of people associated with him. The Aramaic of Matthew 27:60 and Mark 15:46 shows this figure of speech is utilized in reference to Joseph and his servants. see Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, pp. 613-614, 640, 648-649.

John 19:40:

Then took they [Nicodemus and his servants] the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

The word "they" in the King James Version has given the impression that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were working together. This cannot be true from the records given in the other three Gospels. The word "they" refers to Nicodemus and his helpers, excluding Joseph of Arimathea. Nicodemus, aware of Jesus' burial place, went with his servants to the sepulchre, rolled away the stone, and "took" the body to wrap and anoint it according to burial customs of that time.

Verse 40 is the first time the word "wound" is used. In the other Gospels Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus in a *sindōn*. But now Nicodemus wound the body of Jesus with the spices in linen clothes, *othonion* meaning "bandages or wrappings, grave clothes." These are striking differences.

According to John 20:5, the disciple running to the tomb on the first day of the week came to the sepulchre and "stooping down. . . saw the linen clothes. . . ." In verse 6 Simon Peter entered the sepulchre and he "seeth the linen clothes lie." The word for "linen clothes" in both verses is not *sindōn*, but *othonion*, meaning "wrappings." Thus, when Nicodemus replaced the *sindōn*, he wrapped Jesus' body with *othonion*, the wrappings which the disciple and Peter observed.

John 19:41:

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

This is the same garden where the women saw Joseph of Arimathea place the body of Jesus and where Mary Magdalene met Jesus after his resurrection.

John 19:42:

There laid they Jesus therefore [after Nicodemus had properly anointed the body and wrapped it for religious burial] because of the Jews' preparation *day* [omit this italicized word] ; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

It was still the time of preparation. "Because" indicates that Nicodemus laid Jesus back in this sepulchre because time was running out before the Feast began, which, of course, would occur at sunset. This verse well documents the fact that sunset was near when Nicodemus came to properly care for the dead body.

Looking at all four Gospel accounts, we note that Joseph of Arimathea and his servants, after receiving permission from Pilate, took the body of Jesus down from the cross, rolled it in a *sindōn*, put it in a nearby sepulchre which had been prepared for this eventuality, rolled the stone to the opening of the sepulchre, and departed. In so doing, he did not observe the customary burial procedure. The women, who had been sitting a short distance from the sepulchre and had noted

Joseph's treatment of Jesus' body, left the location and later prepared the spices and ointment for proper burial, not being aware that Nicodemus would properly care for the body shortly after they left. After Joseph of Arimathea and the women had departed from the garden, Nicodemus and his servants came to the sepulchre, properly wrapped the body in grave clothes (*othonion*) with spices, and buried Jesus according to custom.

The total picture, drawn by studying collectively these four accounts, is most interesting. Nicodemus, with tremendous respect and love for Jesus, subjected himself to legal defilement by touching a dead body. He became unclean for the Passover. However, since he was not planning on a resurrection within a few days, Nicodemus did the unnecessary work of anointing and wrapping the corpse in grave clothes.

In contrast to *all* others, Joseph of Arimathea was unique in that he was the *only* person prepared for both the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He had chosen a plot of ground in a garden near Golgotha and had had a sepulchre hewn out. After receiving permission to take the body of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea gave it tender but not customary care that would be expected for permanent burial. Joseph's actions confirmed his belief in the lord's teaching that he would rise three days and three nights after being buried.

Perhaps someone will now ask, “What difference does it make if Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus worked independently of each other?” It makes all the difference between an unerring, accurate Word of God and a jumble of half-truths. If God thought it important enough to sacrifice His only-begotten Son for us, then we ought to think it supremely important to accurately divide His Word regarding the information He has given us about it.

Thus in fact, Jesus was placed twice in the same tomb. First, he was buried by Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, who had anticipated his death. And then, before sundown, he was buried again by a ruler of the Judeans named Nicodemus. Nicodemus opened the tomb, removed the linen sheet from the corpse and buried the body again according to custom. Nicodemus closed the tomb again and left very shortly before sunset. By coming into contact with a dead body, both Joseph and Nicodemus became ceremonially unclean to participate in the Passover. These two highly respected men buried Jesus in two different manners, one believing that Jesus would get up in a short time, the other thinking him dead in perpetuity. That is the greatness of Jesus’ burial late on Wednesday afternoon, and this concluded the day of the crucifixion, the fourteenth of Nisan.

CHAPTER NINE

LAST SUPPER THROUGH BURIAL: OUR LORD'S SUFFERINGS

The events of the thirteenth and fourteenth of Nisan are documented in more detail than any other two days in the entire Word of God. This alone should demonstrate to us the vital necessity of rightly dividing these records with minute accuracy. If God thought these two days important enough to merit such full reporting, then surely we can consider them important enough to merit our careful scrutiny. We will not see God’s Word fit together if we stretch information or ignore details or say, “What difference does it make?” These two days must be given a careful and complete examination for they are filled with some of the most important events of all time.

In the previous three chapters we have studied in detail the events of the thirteenth and fourteenth of Nisan. Because each study was so lengthy, this chapter

will review the events of these two days, placing a special emphasis on the sufferings endured by our lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

The thirteenth of Nisan began with the last supper and ended in the judgment hall. About the time of sunset closing Monday the twelfth, the last supper began. There is good reason to believe that the location of this supper was Bethany. We also know that this last supper was not the Passover meal, as the supper occurred some forty-eight hours before the Passover meal was scheduled to be eaten. Besides the twelve apostles, other disciples were probably present. The supper included a teaching by Jesus about service, demonstrated by his washing the disciples' feet. At this point in time, Jesus knew that this would be his last meal. He told those present that one of the twelve apostles would betray him. Later, he told Judas he would be the one to do it. Though he had been given the coveted sop, denoting great honor and friendship, Judas left to carry out his plan of betrayal. Also at this meal, Jesus Christ instituted the "holy communion." After the diners finished eating, he foretold that Peter would deny him; he gave them the commandment concerning love and taught them great truths about God's peace and the future; and he taught them of the coming comforter, the gift of holy spirit. They sang a hymn of praise and departed to the Mount of Olives. Their eventual destination was a familiar spot, the Garden of Gethsemane.

During this walk to the garden, Jesus spoke forth the magnificent truths of John 15 and 16. He stopped and prayed the tremendous prayer of the seventeenth chapter of John. He taught them of fellowship, of the future, their power of attorney, and of his death. Also during this walk, he twice declared that Peter would deny him, while Peter persistently insisted that he would stand for Jesus in the face of all difficulties.

Finally, Jesus and his disciples arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane. There, while his disciples fell asleep, Jesus prayed fervently three separate times. As Jesus put his entire heart and soul into the prayer, his perspiration was profuse. In his prayers he asked God if any other way could be found to accomplish God's purpose without the agonizing suffering and death Jesus had before him. After three prayers, the final and complete answer was established: there was no other way. Jesus was to go through with the stream of coming events as they had been revealed to him.

At this point in the late evening, hundreds of armed Roman soldiers, officers of the Levitical Temple guard, and incensed religious leaders arrived at the Garden. Awed by Jesus Christ's collected, fearless behavior when he came out to them to ask whom they sought, the questioning soldiers stepped back and dropped to the ground. Judas came and kissed Jesus hoping to fool the disciples while secretly showing the soldiers which man to arrest. Jesus, however, was not deceived. In the turmoil and tension of the moment, Peter pulled out his

dagger and cut the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus demanded that Peter stop his fighting and turned to Malchus and performed a miracle of healing, restoring his ear. Jesus reproved those arresting him, and then he gave himself over to the soldiers. As the soldiers led him away, the disciples scattered.

Jesus was then brought to the palace of the high priest where he first appeared before Annas. In the meantime, Peter had followed and had managed, with the help of an influential disciple, to get into the inner courtyard of this palace. That disciple had used his influence to convince the young, female doorkeeper to let Peter in. This doorkeeper suddenly asked Peter if he were one of Jesus' disciples. Peter denied it. While Jesus was before Annas, the high priest began to interrogate him and Jesus responded with even-tempered emotions and boldness. Outraged by a challenge given the high priest by Jesus, an officer standing nearby beat him with a thin, whip-like cane, the first of many beatings dealt to Jesus before his crucifixion.

From Annas, Jesus was taken to Caiaphas. At this time two noted events occur simultaneously. While Jesus was within the palace facing Caiaphas, Peter was out in the courtyard facing a series of accusations.

When Jesus was taken before Caiaphas, he faced not only Caiaphas, but the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin gathered there as well. This trial was full of illegalities. It began late at night, an unlawful hour for such a gathering. The priests and Sanhedrin illegally

sought and used false witnesses in an attempt to frame Jesus. Finally the high priest himself interrogated Jesus. When they heard him say he was the Messiah, for he would one day sit at God's right hand, Caiaphas ripped his priestly mantle in anger and accused Jesus of blasphemy.

The Sanhedrin, following Caiaphas' lead, judged Jesus guilty and called for the death penalty. Having done this, the high priest, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders began to torture Jesus: they spit in his face; they put a covering over his head so he couldn't see and began to beat him repeatedly on the face and body with their fists and whip-like rods; they thoroughly thrashed him, opening terrible wounds. While beating him on the head, they jeered at him to prophesy who was hitting him. They were mocking his being a prophet by challenging him to identify his unseen attackers.

In the meantime, Peter was still out in the courtyard—cold, weary, afraid, and restless. He was growing increasingly fearful of the people around him. As he sat by the fire, a young maiden came up and directly accused him of having been with Jesus. Peter, trembling, denied it, his second denial. After a little while a man walked up and accused him of being one of the disciples. Peter denied Jesus a third time. Peter went back to the courtyard entrance and a cock crowed. Peter was nervous about those who had accused him, for he was deep in enemy territory and did not want to be caught. The fourth accuser was another maiden who kept the

door. She accused him of having been with Jesus (who at that very time was being beaten inside the palace). With an oath, Peter swore he did not know Jesus and returned to the fire in the courtyard. Before long, several of those at the fire suspiciously began accusing him of being one of the Galilean disciples of Jesus. Swearing and cursing, Peter vowed that he did not know Jesus. Very quickly a man who had seen him at the Garden of Gethsemane spoke up in recognition and confidently accused him. Peter denied Jesus for the sixth time and he heard the cock crow a second time while yet speaking the final denial. With that, he looked up and saw the beaten face of his master. Their eyes met in an emotion-filled moment no words will ever adequately describe. Remembering his lord's prophecies only a few hours before and seeing his master so badly marred, Peter walked out of the courtyard into the street in tears. By now it was early morning, approximately 1:30 A.M. Concerning what occurred between this moment and sunrise, God's Word is silent.

Around dawn the priests and Sanhedrin met again to try Jesus, according to their legal standard of two trial appearances for capital offences. This trial appearance also was a sham, though it had the pretense of looking official. They brought up the same questions and accusations they had used a few hours before. Jesus unwaveringly gave the same responses. The accusers' judgment became final: this man should die. With that,

Jesus was led away to the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate.

Before Pilate, the religious leaders presented a distorted version of their accusation in order to convince him. Pilate questioned Jesus and found no fault in him. Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but the religious leaders persisted. Pilate finally found respite for himself when he heard that Jesus was a Galilean. With this, Pilate conveniently had an excuse to send Jesus to Herod, the tetrarch¹ of Galilee. The religious leaders followed Jesus as he was taken to Herod.

Herod happened to be in Jerusalem that day. Upon seeing the renowned Jesus, he mockingly asked him to do a miracle. The religious leaders were vociferous in their accusations. Receiving no reply from Jesus, Herod and his soldiers treated him with contempt. They dressed him in ornate, royal raiment as if he were a king and sent him back to Pilate. With this mutual involvement in the case of Jesus, Pilate and Herod became friends for the first time.

In the meantime, Judas had become distraught by the chain of events. He returned to the Temple to bring the thirty pieces of silver, the betrayal money, back to the priests and elders. They rejected it because it was "blood money." Judas, greatly distressed, threw the money down in the Temple and left, choked with emotion and grief. He could get rid of the money given

1. A tetrarch was a governor of one-fourth of a province.

him for betraying Jesus, but he could not erase the deed itself. The chief priests and elders took Judas' money. But since they could not put "blood money" into the Temple treasury, they used it to buy land for burying strangers.

By this time Jesus had been returned from Herod to Pilate. Once again, Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king. Jesus agreed that he was. As the religious leaders then began to barrage him with accusations, Jesus did not respond. Neither did he respond to Pilate. Pilate was totally amazed by this Jesus of Nazareth. Realizing that the religious leaders were trying to get rid of Jesus out of envy, but still afraid of going against their wishes, Pilate decided he would take the issue of what to do with Jesus to the people.

By involving the people, Pilate thought he would get them to support Jesus' release. When the religious leaders and the people were gathered before Pilate, they cried for the release of a prisoner according to the custom of releasing one prisoner at Passover time. Pilate gave them a choice: Jesus Christ or a murderer and revolutionary named Jesus Barabbas. By this time, Pilate was becoming increasingly disturbed and inextricably caught in a web of emotion. At a crucial, awkward moment, his own wife warned him to let Jesus go. But the people, influenced by the religious leaders, called for the release of Barabbas. Pilate offered to scourge Jesus and let him go. But the crowd insisted on having Barabbas released, not Jesus Christ.

Shaken, Pilate went back into the judgment hall. It is here that he had Jesus scourged. Jesus was brutally flogged by Roman soldiers with a whip having bone or metal at the end of the thongs. The effects of such punishment are described by the Psalmist.

Psalms 129:2 and 3:

Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.

The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

When being whipped in this way, the condemned man would be stripped and tied to a stake. The whipping on his bare back would hideously gouge the flesh, literally plowing it loose from the ribs and vertebrae. Large ugly welts would be raised on the body as the rows of plowed flesh lined his back. Bleeding would be profuse. Pilate's soldiers also beat him again with their whip-like rods and placed a crown of thorns on his head.

We must remember that there is no record of Jesus' getting any sleep between the time of his arrest (or even for some time before it) until the time of his death. His disciples were too weary to pray with him as early as the time of his arrest. Think how weary Jesus must have been by the time he appeared before Pilate. Such fatigue heightens a person's sensitivity to pain.

Pilate then put a purple outer garment on Jesus, possibly a mantle. Having so badly scourged him, Pilate

paraded him before the people, a laughingstock of a king. Pilate hoped that seeing a man in this condition would cause the crowd to sympathize and call for his release.

With bloody visage, Jesus was disgraced, a public spectacle. Pilate said, "Behold the man!" One wonders how much Jesus even resembled a man at this time. Long before, Isaiah had prophesied of the extreme physical disfiguration the Messiah would suffer.

Isaiah 52:14:

. . . his form, disfigured, lost all the likeness of a man, his beauty changed beyond human semblance [New English Bible].

Jesus Christ was beaten so badly that he was changed beyond human semblance. Despite Pilate's ploy to gain sympathy for Jesus, the mob's reply, again under the influence of the religious leaders, was to crucify Jesus. With this, Pilate went back into the judgment hall and interrogated Jesus one last time. It did no good. He still found no way to convince the crowd to call for Jesus' release. Pilate tried one more appeal to the crowd. Though desperate in his desire to let Jesus go, Pilate dreaded going against the crowd's wishes. The crowd taunted his position as a Roman ruler by pitting Jesus' claim as king against the kingship of Caesar, thereby insinuating that Pilate was allowing Jesus to commit treason. This was unbearable pressure for Pilate. The

crowd prevailed. By this time it was about noon on Tuesday.

After conceding to the crowd, Pilate washed his hands, a symbolic act of ridding himself of the responsibility of Jesus' death. He placed the responsibility on the Judeans—who readily accepted it. Although the execution was carried out by Pilate's Roman soldiers, in the final analysis, the Judean religious leaders were responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pilate gave in to the pressure they heaped on him. The contradictory and desperate actions of Pilate make him one of the most intriguing personalities in this record.

After this Pilate sent Jesus into the judgment hall (called the Praetorium) with the soldiers on the afternoon of the thirteenth of Nisan. Little is known about what occurred between then and the next morning. What is recorded tells of horrendous torture.

Pilate had Jesus brutally flogged again. At the Praetorium, a cohort of four to six hundred soldiers gathered to mock and torture him some more. They stripped Jesus again. Each time his garments were stripped from him, the dried blood and scabs sticking to them would be painfully ripped off. They mockingly dressed him in a royal purple garment and a scarlet military cloak.

After braiding a crown made out of thorns, the soldiers mercilessly pressed it into his scalp and stuck a reed in his hand as if it were a royal scepter. They tauntingly began bowing before him as if he were a

king. Then they spit on him, grabbed the reed, and began beating him on the head with it. Each blow drove the thorns into his head with agonizing pain. Head wounds are known to bleed profusely. Every garment put on him would become stained and soaked with the blood. As the blood collected on his scalp, his hair would be grotesquely matted down. Along with the torture, the mocking continued.

By morning, the soldiers put his own garments back on him, once again renewing the pain and bleeding by changing his clothes. Then they dragged him out of the judgment hall. By this time it is doubtful that he was capable of walking on his own.

As the soldiers left the Praetorium, they singled out a man passing by named Simon of Cyrene. The soldiers compelled him to bear the cross that Jesus could not possibly have had the strength to carry. He was so weak and badly beaten that he could barely stand on his feet, let alone bear a cross. The soldiers would have to carry him to Golgotha.

Coming through the streets of Jerusalem, the throngs saw a completely battered man, one who was a bloody mass of beaten, torn flesh; one who was beyond human semblance; one who was hardly recognizable as a man; one who had been thrashed savagely with whips and rods, pounded with fists, cuffed with palms, and repeatedly beaten with sticks; one who had his face and head covered and beaten savagely while being taunted to name his unseen strikers; one who had his dried scabs

repeatedly torn off by those changing his garments to mock him; one who had two crowns of thorns placed on his head, at least one of which was beaten into his scalp; one who, in the face of all this physical torture, was accused and interrogated in a manner totally illegal, unfounded, and relentless; one who was spit upon repeatedly, dressed and undressed by others at will, paraded as a fool's "king" before a multitude clamoring for his death, and mocked as a fool's "king" by hundreds of torturing soldiers.

This is the man whom the crowd lined the streets of Jerusalem to see that day. This is the man the soldiers carried, with his false accusation in full display, to Golgotha that Wednesday morning. This was our savior. This was our Passover lamb. This was the ultimate sacrifice. This was a man who had done nothing but love people, heal people, and declare God's truth. This was the man who could have summoned over 72,000 angels to free him at a moment's notice, but rather chose to bear the full pain and humiliation. This was the man who did it all because he so loved you and me. This was God's only-begotten Son.

As the soldiers dragged Jesus up to Golgotha, he managed to turn his head toward some women among the crowd. Rather than asking for pity, he declared to them the truth of what was coming to pass. Jesus' tremendous ability to rivet his mind on God's Word at all times, under all circumstances, is awesome.

Two malefactors were taken to Golgotha for crucifixion at the same time Jesus was. As they approached Golgotha, a drink of wine and myrrh was given to him, which he refused to drink. Such drinks were normally offered as painkillers for the victim, but Jesus Christ chose to bear the full pain and agony for us.

Upon arriving at Golgotha a second drink was offered to him. This was a cheap wine mixed with gall, a painkiller. He tasted it but again refused to drink. In crucifying him at Golgotha, the law of killing the Passover lamb outside the city gates was fulfilled.

The soldiers then nailed Jesus to the cross, with the two malefactors on crosses to each side of him. It was about 9:00 A. M. The soldiers guarding Jesus' cross took off his outer garment. They ripped it up into four parts, giving a part to each of the four attending soldiers. Then they took his seamless tunic and gambled for it. Once again the mocking crowd began their derision, urged on by the religious leaders. They challenged Jesus to prove himself to be the Messiah by getting down off the stake. Mocking him, the soldiers offered him another drink of cheap wine. The soldiers then sat down and watched Jesus. The accusation, which had been ordered by Pilate to be written in three languages, was then placed over his head on the cross. While one of the malefactors reviled him, the other one spoke kindly and believed. To the latter, Jesus turned and promised a future paradise. Then two more men, robbers, were brought out to be

crucified with the three who had been crucified earlier. There were now five crucified.

The railings continued. From noon until about 3:00 P.M. there was darkness over the face of the earth. Then with a shout of triumph, Jesus Christ exclaimed, "My God! My God! For this purpose was I spared!" His purpose was the accomplishment of our redemption. It was a cry of victory in the midst of what appeared to be total defeat. The hardened, skeptical crowd misunderstood Jesus to be crying for Elijah. One of them ran, filled a sponge with the wine, placed it on a reed, and lifted it, offering it to Jesus. This was the fourth drink offered to him.

During his last hours on the cross, Jesus thoughtfully entrusted his mother to the disciple whom he loved. Then he finally requested a drink with the short statement, "I thirst." One of his friends or one of his family, with the use of some hyssop, lifted a drink to Jesus' lips.

Then he cried, "It is finished!" He had finished the work God had sent him to do. With that he proclaimed, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He bowed his head and gave up his life. After approximately forty hours of relentless mental and physical torture, the Son of God was dead. At that moment, the veil of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, eliminating the separation between God and man; our sins had been atoned for. Simultaneously there was a great earthquake. The entire series of events caused the centurion, the military officer in charge, to believe. The

people looking on at Golgotha beat their breasts in fear and awe.

Before long, soldiers came from Pilate. Breaking the legs of two of the criminals on the first two crosses in order to hasten their death, the soldiers came to Jesus on the center cross. Jesus was dead already so they did not break his legs. However, one of the soldiers took a spear and pierced his side, causing blood and water to gush out.

Finally, a highly respected man named Joseph of Arimathea requested from Pilate the body of Jesus. Believing that Jesus would rise from the dead, Joseph, with the help of his servants, took the body down from the cross on Golgotha and buried it in a sepulchre close by. The women watched as Joseph simply wrapped Jesus' body with a linen cloth and laid him in the tomb. He closed the tomb and left. The women left to make preparation for a proper burial later on. After they had gone, Nicodemus, another Judean ruler, came with his servants to the tomb and buried Jesus again. This time the burial was according to Judean custom. The burial was completed before sunset ending Wednesday, the fourteenth of Nisan.

As we look back on the crucifixion, we see the extreme in agony and suffering. Jesus had been beaten, whipped, mocked, interrogated, and accused during a period of well over thirty hours from the time of his arrest to the time he was led to Golgotha. The mental pressure before and during this time was every bit as

agonizing as the physical beatings. His visage was so marred that Isaiah prophesies, "we hid as it were *our* faces from him."

Finally, he hung on the cross for approximately six hours before his death. Hanging on a cross was terrible torture. Breathing was painful, almost impossible. There would be terrible muscle spasms and cramps. Nails through the hands or feet would sever extremely sensitive nerves and tendons. Compounded with the pain, blood, and wounds prior to crucifixion, the experience of our savior's last six hours of life from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. was the ultimate degree of agony.

Jesus suffered every physical hurt imaginable without having any bones broken. The buffeting with clenched fists would have caused great bruises or contusions. The thorns beaten into his head could cause penetration wounds pouring forth blood. The nails driven into his hands and his feet would cause wounds of perforation. The flogging and whipping he underwent would cause tremendous lacerations. But Jesus Christ experienced many other painful wounds, mentally and physically, besides these.

He was a man acquainted with sickness, pain, and grief. He was a man who became the lowest so that he could uphold anyone who would believe. He is a man who can save to the uttermost those who want to believe. He is our brother, who suffered and died for you and for me. He so loved us that his wounds overcame our transgressions, our external sins. His bruises

overcame our iniquities and internal sins. His mental distress overcame our lack of peace and our unsound minds. His stripes overcame our physical sickness, He is a complete savior. He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 52:14-53:12:

As many were astonished [amazed] at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

For he [Jesus Christ] shall grow up before him [God] as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry [parched] ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him [no beauty that we should be attracted to him].

He [Jesus Christ] is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows [pains], and acquainted with grief [sickness]: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs [sickness], and carried our sorrows [pains]: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

In dying this ignoble death, Jesus Christ was numbered with the transgressors. Yet, because he who knew no sin became sin, God has made us the righteousness of God in him. In Jesus Christ we have the most precious gift of all: eternal life.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FIFTEENTH THROUGH THE SEVENTEENTH OF NISAN

As the fourteenth of Nisan ends, we enter three of the darkest days in the history of mankind. Israel had rejected its Messiah. The world's only hope lay dead in a tomb. Very little is recorded in God's Word about these three days. The events of which we are told begin when the chief priests and Pharisees return to ask yet another request of Pilate.

Matthew 27:62-66:

Now the next day, that followed the day of [omit "the day of"] the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver [referring to Jesus] said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure [be secured] until the third day, lest his disciples come by night,

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	11	12	13
	Jerusalem at Temple	Preparation of room for the Passover	Trial & Torture
	Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	Matt. 26:6-19 Mark 14:3-36 Luke 22:3-13	Matt. 26:20-31a Mark 14:17-15:20a Luke 22:14-23:25 John 13:1-19:16a
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	18	19	20

1. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8	9	10
		6 days before Passover	1st entry to Jerusalem	Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb
		John 12:1-11	Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	14	15	16	17
	Crucifixion	The Passover meal Feast begins	Buy & Prepare Spices & Oils	Weekly Sabbath
	Matt. 27:31b-61 Mark 15:20b-47 John 19:16b-42	Matt. 27:62-66 Guards at Tomb	Mark 16:1 Luke 23:56a	Resurrection
	The Passover sacrifice	High day Special Sabbath		Matt. 28:1-4 Luke 23:56b
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21	22	23	24

set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error [deception] shall be worse than the first.

Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch [guard]: go your way, make *it* as sure [secure] as ye can [know].

So they went, and made the sepulchre sure [secure], sealing the stone, and setting a watch [“sealing the stone with the guard”].

The religious leaders did everything possible to see that Jesus Christ not only died, but that no one removed his body from the sepulchre. They wanted to be certain that his fanatical disciples would not make more trouble by stealing the body and then claiming that Jesus had risen from the dead. Thus, the leaders requested Pilate to let them have the tomb secured. This was done on the fifteenth of Nisan, the special Sabbath. In going to Pilate, it is doubtful they went into his palace. That would have defiled them for the Feast that had already begun. Therefore, it is likely that Pilate came out to meet them as he had done before in John 18:29. Although the Passover meal had been eaten the night before, the Feast of Unleavened Bread would continue for several more days.

The religious leaders instructed the guards to seal and watch the sepulchre. The leaders were determined that this Jesus should cause them no more trouble. They feared him even after his death.

The sealing of the stone involved putting the mark or seal of the Roman ruler on it. It meant “Government

Orders: Hands Off!” Anyone breaking this order would be punished. The custom involved with this type of seal can be seen in Daniel.

Daniel 6:17:

And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

So the stone over the burial place was sealed and guards watched the tomb continuously. The guards began duty on the fifteenth. The religious leaders had requested a watch “until the third day.” Thus, since this meant that the tomb would be secured and guarded at least for the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth, we understand why no disciples would be able to enter the sepulchre to anoint the body until at least sometime Sunday, the eighteenth. All of these details are very significant in God’s Word. These events are the ones recorded on the fifteenth, the special Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

On the next day, the women made some preparations, as recorded in Mark and Luke.

Mark 16:1:

And when the sabbath [special Sabbath or high day; Thursday, the fifteenth] was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had [“had” is not in text] bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

On the sixteenth of Nisan the women went and bought spices for anointing the body. They could not have purchased them on the fifteenth or the seventeenth because those days were Sabbaths and the marketplace would therefore be closed. However, the sixteenth, Friday, was not a Sabbath.

Though the women acquired the spices on the sixteenth, they would not have been able to anoint Jesus' body that day because of the guards at the sepulchre. Whether they went to the tomb to attempt to do so is not recorded. It is interesting to note that these women had seen Joseph bury Jesus without properly anointing him. After observing Joseph's work, they returned home, rested on the Sabbath of the fifteenth and bought spices on the sixteenth, desiring to anoint the body at their first opportunity. This demonstrates that the women did not realize Nicodemus had come after Joseph to give the body a proper burial. If they had known this, there would have been no need for them to feel obliged to properly bury Jesus' body themselves.

Luke 23:56:

And they [the women] returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day [weekly Sabbath] according to the commandment.

Since the spices were bought on the sixteenth, the day after the special Sabbath, they could not prepare them until then. That is why the above verse refers to

the seventeenth, the weekly Sabbath. The women rested on the fifteenth (Mark 15:42), bought and prepared spices and ointments on the sixteenth (Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56), and rested on the weekly Sabbath (Luke 23:56), the seventeenth. That is the simplicity with which God's Word fits.

After buying and preparing spices and ointments on Friday, the guards at the sepulchre would have still prevented the women from anointing the body of Jesus. However, there was nothing to stop the women from coming to view the sepulchre from the outside if they so desired. On Saturday, the weekly Sabbath, the guards continued their watch while others rested according to the commandment. In the following chapter we will look at the important record in God's Word as the seventeenth of Nisan draws to a close.

PART II

JESUS CHRIST OUR FIRSTFRUITS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EIGHTEENTH OF NISAN

To understand how the eighteenth began, we must return to the close of the seventeenth. Some important verses regarding this time are found in Matthew 28.

Matthew 28:1:

In the end of [the Greek is better translated “Now late on”] the sabbath [late on the weekly Sabbath] , as it began to dawn [“as it was getting dusk”] toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see [*theoreō*, to gaze on] the sepulchre.

The word “dawn” is the Greek word *epiphōskā*, used Biblically of “dusk.” The Sabbath would end at sunset,

1. The Aramaic word *ngh* can also be used of “dusk” or “twilight.” This is the way *epiphōskā* and *ngh* are used in Luke 23:54. They refer to the time when a new day was drawing on, which was around sunset by Judean reckoning. see A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 vols, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930-1933), 1:240 and 2:289; Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 327; Matthew Black, *An Aramaic*

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	4	5	6
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
11	Jerusalem at Temple Matt. 21:18-26:5 Mark 11:2-14:2 Luke 20:1-22:2	12 Preparation of room for the Passover Matt. 26:6-19 Mark 14:3-36 Luke 22:3-13	13 Trial & Torture Matt. 26:20-31a Mark 14:17-15:20a Luke 22:14-23:25 John 13:1-19:16a
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
18	Firstfruits Wave-Offering Post-Resurrection Appearances Matt. 28:5-15 Mark 16:2-14 Luke 24:1-45 John 20:1-24	19	20

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7	8 6 days before Passover John 12:1-11	9 1st entry to Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11 Luke 19:29-44 John 12:12-19	10 Weekly Sabbath Selection of Lamb 2nd entry to Jerusalem Matt. 21:1-17 Mark 11:12-19 Luke 19:45-56
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
14	Crucifixion Matt. 27:31b-61 Mark 15:20b-47 John 19:16b-42 The Passover sacrifice	15 The Passover meal Feast begins Matt. 27:62-66 Guards at Tomb High day Special Sabbath	16 Buy & Prepare Spices & Oils Mark 16:1 Luke 23:56a	17 Weekly Sabbath Resurrection Matt. 28:1-4 Luke 23:56b
	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
21	Feast Ends High Day Special Sabbath	22	23	24

Approach to the Gospel and Acts, 3d. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1967), pp. 136-138; and George Ricker Berry, *The Interlinear Translation of the Greek New Testament* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), p. 86.

2. This chart represents part of the first month of the Hebrew calendar in the resurrection year. The dates are given according to Hebrew time

reckoning, in which the day begins at sunset. Since by modern reckoning the day begins at midnight, the modern names of the days of the week are set forth to show the time relationship to modern readers. Some events taking place near sunset may actually overlap the end of one day and the beginning of the next.

around dusk, on Saturday. So these two women came to the tomb as the weekly Sabbath was drawing to a close near sunset. At that sunset on Saturday, the first day of the week began. The women's purpose in coming was to see, to gaze on, the sepulchre. They were not intending to see the body or to anoint the body, only to view the sepulchre. Since the guards were there and the sepulchre was sealed with the Roman seal, the women would not have been permitted into the sepulchre.

Matthew 28:2:

And, behold,³ there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back [rolled off] the stone from the door [the Aramaic can be translated "from the entrance"] ,and sat upon it.

Since these events occurred late on the Sabbath, shortly before sunset, it further documents that Jesus Christ arose late that Saturday afternoon, the third day after his death. Verse 2 describes events that happened shortly after the two women had seen the sepulchre and left. The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, there was a great earthquake, and the stone over the burial place was rolled off the opening. When the angel sat on the stone, it made it literally impossible for anyone to put the stone back on the opening of the sepulchre. The next two verses give further details about the angel.

3. The expression "And, behold" indicates in Biblical usage that a new topic is being introduced.

Matthew 28:3 and 4:

His [the angel's] countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

And for fear of him the keepers [those keeping guard] did shake [trembled] , and became as dead *men*.

The angel's appearance was brilliant. The entire situation absolutely stunned and overwhelmed the guards. They shook and became as dead, frozen.

Chronologically, the next recorded occurrence takes place very early the following morning, Sunday.

John 20:1:

The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene came by herself to the sepulchre. Arriving well before sunrise she, with the aid of a nearly full moon,⁴ saw the stone rolled off. Mary Magdalene assumed that the body had been taken away. She ran to find Peter and the other disciple and inform them of what she had seen.

John 20:2:

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we ["I" in Aramaic] know not where they have laid him.

4. Passover was always at the full moon, since the first month always began with a new moon. By the eighteenth of Nisan the moon would be between full and three-quarters full.

Mary Magdalene ran to Peter, extremely distressed, believing Jesus' body to have been taken away.

John 20:3-5:

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

And he [the other disciple] stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes [*othonion*, bandages, wrappings, grave clothes] lying; yet went he not in.

He saw the *othonion*. These were the grave wrappings used by Nicodemus in burying Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea had used a *sindōn*, a linen cloth or sheet. How accurate the Word is. Nicodemus had been the last one to handle Jesus' body in burying him.

John 20:6-8:

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes [*othonion*] lie,

And the napkin [*soudarion*, a cloth, kerchief], that was about [upon] his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together [folded] in a place by itself.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

The linen wrappings, the *othonion*, remained as they had been when swathed around the body. The record in John 20 is making the point that these grave wrappings

were undisturbed. They were still in the position as when containing a body. When Jesus Christ was raised, he had been given a new body. In his new, spiritual body, Jesus Christ had passed through the grave wrappings. If his body had been taken by others, as Mary claimed, these grave clothes would either have been taken along with the body or they would have been unwound and tossed to the side. The cloth that had covered his face was neatly folded and placed off to the side. When the other disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved, saw the empty tomb and the undisturbed grave wrappings, he believed. He realized Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead.

John 20:9:

For as yet [*oudepō*, never before, until then] they [Peter and the disciple] knew not [did not understand] the scripture, that he must rise again from [from among] the dead.

The words "as yet" in verse 9 have been misunderstood by most readers to indicate that Peter and the other disciple did not believe Jesus had been resurrected. The Greek word for "as yet" is *oudepō* and can be translated here as "never before" or "until then." Up to the time of this visit to the tomb, neither Peter nor the other disciple had considered that Jesus would be resurrected because they had not considered the scriptural truth that Jesus would rise again from the dead. Now having seen the empty tomb and grave wrappings, the disciple whom Jesus loved believed. He

suddenly realized that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Peter's response is not recorded here.

John 20:10 and 11:

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home [Aramaic says "their place"].

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene had followed the two disciples back to the sepulchre, where she stood crying. Verse 11 is the first record of Mary's looking into the sepulchre. Upon looking in, she saw two angels and mistook them for men.

John 20:12 and 13:

And [Mary Magdalene] seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

This is the first time *two* angels are mentioned. The previous evening there had only been one angel sitting on the stone. Mary Magdalene, weeping, told the two angels of the missing body of her master. And this time the angels are inside the sepulchre.

John 20:14:

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back [she

turned around], and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

This is Jesus Christ's first post-resurrection appearance after witnessing in his resurrected body to the imprisoned spirits.⁵ He appeared to Mary Magdalene, yet she did not recognize him. She thought he was dead and that his body had been taken. This first appearance to Mary Magdalene is approximately twelve hours after his resurrection.

John 20:15-17:

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.

5. I Peter 3:18.20: "For Christ also bath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

II Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

Jude 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Mary, mistaking her lord to be the gardener, only recognized her master's voice when Jesus lovingly spoke her name. What a thrill surely filled her soul. In a moment of indescribable emotion, she turned and cried out, "Master!" For the first time in history, a person beheld the resurrected Christ. He did not appear to a king, a priest, or a ruler. He appeared to a simple, loving disciple who had faithfully cared for him.

Jesus did not allow Mary to touch him, because he was the firstfruits from the dead. The wave-offering of the firstfruits, in which the firstfruits of the spring barley harvest were presented as an offering to God in the Temple, was to occur that same day. Jesus Christ would now replace that offering as the true firstfruits from the dead.⁶ Normally, the priest presenting the offering would go up to the Temple to present it before the Lord. That is the meaning of the expression, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God and your God." Christ would go up and, as the high priest, present himself before God as the firstfruits from the dead. It does not refer to his ascension to heaven which was yet forty days away.

In preparing to present himself as the firstfruits, Christ would, in accordance with Old Testament law, keep himself separated until it was accomplished.⁷ The

6. I Corinthians 15:20 and 23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.... But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

7. In the law, priests were to cleanse themselves at a brass laver of water near the entrance to the tabernacle before going in (Exodus 30:17-21). According to Leviticus 21:6, the priest had to be holy or set apart when

wave-offering of the firstfruits was a public offering, meaning it was performed by the priests on behalf of the nation. Therefore, a priest would maintain a state of ceremonial purity before bringing the offering before the Lord at the Temple. Besides being himself the firstfruits offering, Jesus Christ was the priest making the offering. He was showing himself as the true high priest to Israel.⁸

It was the first day of the week, our Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath. According to Old Testament law, the firstfruits wave-offering was always done on the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Leviticus 23:10 and 11:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf [*omer*, handful] of the firstfruits [*reshith*] of your harvest unto the priest:

presenting certain offerings to God. According to Leviticus 22:1-9, no priest could handle or partake of the holy offerings unless he was ceremonially pure, meaning, among other things, he had not touched anyone who could legally be considered unclean. Only priests were to handle the vessels of the sanctuary, the vessels of the altar, or be involved with any service rendered within the veil. No "common man" (not a priest or Levite) was to come near the priests as they carried out their priestly service in the Temple (Numbers 18:1-7).

8. Hebrews 5:5,6; 8:1: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; and he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also In another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

"Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath [in context, this is the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread⁹] the priest shall wave it.

In this resurrection year, the firstfruits offering was to be offered on the eighteenth of Nisan, our Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast. This is how wonderfully Jesus Christ fulfilled the law in minute detail. On the day of the firstfruits offering, he presented himself as the firstfruits from the dead. This is what John 20:17 refers to when Jesus Christ told Mary that he had to ascend “unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.”

According to Leviticus 23:10-21, the day of this firstfruits offering was also the first day of counting toward Pentecost. From this day, they were to number seven Sabbaths (literal weekly Sabbaths). The final Sabbath would be the forty-ninth day, The next day, the fiftieth day, was Pentecost. Isn't it astounding how God in His foreknowledge arranged the law and the

9. There has been controversy over the centuries as to this usage of the word “Sabbath.” Even the Pharisees and Sadducees were in heated disagreement on this matter. One group has taken “Sabbath” here to mean the special Sabbath of the fifteenth of Nisan. This would always place the firstfruits offering on the sixteenth. The other group has taken “Sabbath” to mean the weekly Sabbath during the Feast, as we do here. The overall context of Leviticus 23, chronological considerations, and the timing of Jesus Christ's resurrection and appearances prove the latter to be correct. Some feel Joshua 5:10-12 would discount this, but the following considerations must be made there: (1) Joshua does not mention a wave-offering, and (2) there is no reason the weekly Sabbath could not have fallen on the fifteenth of Nisan that year.

calendar to so perfectly correspond to what Jesus Christ would ultimately accomplish! There are no words to adequately express the perfection of God and His Word. The timing of the resurrection and Christ's presentation of himself as the firstfruits from the dead unmistakably demonstrate his resurrection. As Romans 1:4 teaches us, it was in the resurrection that Jesus Christ was marked out as the Son of God. The resurrection proved who he was beyond a shadow of a doubt. That Jesus Christ was alive and would present himself to God as the firstfruits from the dead was the instruction Jesus Christ gave Mary Magdalene to tell his disciples, his brethren.¹⁰

Mary carried out those instructions. A summary of Christ's appearance to Mary and her subsequent action is found in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 16:9:

Now when *Jesus* was risen [having risen] early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

The comma in this verse has been misplaced by translators. The first part of this verse should literally read, “Now having risen, early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene. - . . .” This verse does not say that Jesus was raised on the first day of the week. It says he appeared to Mary early on the first day

10. Surely, if Jesus were God, he would be even more so after the resurrection. Yet, even after the resurrection, he offered himself to God as the firstfruits from the dead, thus demonstrating that Jesus Christ was not and is not God.

of the week, after he had already been raised, It also clearly states, as we have already read in John 20, that Mary Magdalene was the first person to see the resurrected Christ on what is now called Easter Sunday morning.

Mark 16:10:

And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

Those who had been with Jesus included the women. They had come with him from Galilee and ministered to him. The women had been at the crucifixion as their teacher endured his last hours of suffering, and they had been on hand as Joseph of Arimathea took his body from the cross and buried it. They had purchased spices and oils to properly embalm him for his burial at their first opportunity.¹¹ Apparently, most of the men were fearful and in hiding. However, by this time, both the men and the women¹² were gathered together early in the morning to grieve over the death of their master.

John 20:18:

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

11. For references to these things see the following scriptures: Matthew 27:55,56,61; Mark 15:40,41,47; Luke 23:49 and 55; John 19:25.

12. That men were present is indicated by the pronoun “them” in Mark 16:10. It is masculine plural in Greek and Aramaic, which means a group of either all men or men and women mixed together.

Mark 16:11:

And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

This response is so characteristically human. The first human reaction to God’s great miracles is so often outright disbelief. People today still refuse to believe that God raised His Son from the dead, Jesus’ disciples were still grieving over his death four days after it occurred.

Note that Mark 16:9-11 is a parenthetical statement explaining Mark 16: 1-8, which relates how Mary and the other women went to the Sepulchre later that morning. Verses 9 through 11 explain this by recounting what happened beforehand.

So Mary Magdalene, after seeing Jesus, went and told the disciples in an excited manner. She related that she had seen Jesus Christ and told them the message he had spoken to her (John 20:17). No one believed her. Therefore, the women went as they had planned to the sepulchre to anoint the body and Mary Magdalene accompanied them.¹³ Details of this visit to the sepulchre are found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Luke 24:1:

Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning [at early dawn], they [the women] came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

13. That Mary accompanied them is indicated by the pronoun “they” in Mark 16:2. In context it could refer back to the women in Mark 15:40, 41,47, and 16:1, which would include Mary Magdalene.

Mark 16:2 and 3:

And very early in the morning in the first *day* of the week, they [the women, including Mary Magdalene according to Mark 16:11 came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun [the sun having risen].

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll [“shall roll” is “did roll” in Aramaic] us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

By the time of this visit it was no longer dark as it had been when Mary went alone in John 20. Now it was just after sunrise. According to the Greek texts, the women, including Mary Magdalene, wondered who would roll the stone away for them to get into the tomb.

Something is amiss here because John 20 makes it clear that Mary had learned on an earlier visit that the stone was already rolled away. She certainly would not come to the tomb after this wondering how to move the stone. The problem is one of translation. According to the Aramaic, Mark 16:3 should read, “Who did roll the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?”¹⁴

When Mark 16:3 is accurately understood, it is vitally informative and dynamic. From the women’s point of view, the stone had been rolled away for their benefit—so that they could get into the sepulchre to anoint the body. They desired to properly prepare Jesus’ body, something they felt Joseph of Arimathea had not done. They were unaware that Nicodemus had already anointed

14. It is past tense, “did roll,” according to at least three major Aramaic sources: the Peshitta, the Curetonian Syriac, and the Sinaitic Palimpsest.

the body. Nor did they realize the real reason the tomb was open.

Although the women believed the stone was rolled away, God’s Word makes it clear they did not believe the rest of Mary’s story. Having learned the stone was rolled away, they decided to take advantage of the opportunity to enter the tomb and anoint the body. Previously they could not have done so because of the stone, the seal on the stone, and the guards.¹⁵ Now all three obstacles had been removed, As expected, they found the tomb’s entrance unobstructed.¹⁶

Mark 16:4:

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was [had been] rolled away: for it was very great.

Luke 24:2:

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

That stone was “very great.” The word “away” implies that it was rolled a long distance away from the

15. This will explain why no attempt was made by the women to anoint the body before this. Furthermore, the guards had been requested for at least three days (Matthew 27:62.66), which would include Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The women may or may not have been aware of how long the guards had been assigned there. Regardless, they would have been waiting for the guards to leave and for an opportunity to anoint the body.

16. F.C. Burkitt translates Mark 16:3 and 4 as, “And they were saying in themselves: ‘Now who hath rolled away for us the stone of the tomb? Because it was great exceedingly.’ And they came, and they saw that the stone was rolled away. . . .” This rendering is supported by two old Aramaic manuscripts: the Curetonian Syriac and the Sinaitic Palimpsest. see F. Crawford Burkitt, trans. and ed., *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe: The Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: University Press, 1904), 2:242-243.

opening of the sepulchre. This astounded the women. The record of their entry into the sepulchre is found in three Gospels.

Luke 24:3:

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

Mark 16:5-7:

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Matthew 28:5-7:

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

The record in Matthew 28 has caused problems to many who have not studied it in light of the other Gospels. Matthew 28 briefly summarizes events which occurred over a period of time. In Matthew's account,

God does not render in detail what happened between the first visit to the tomb the previous evening and the visit that morning. He does not make great distinction between the two visits because Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were involved in both. He summarizes and focuses on the actions of these two women when they are together at the tomb. We should also recognize that the first use of the word "and" in Matthew 28:5 is the Greek word *de* meaning "but." "But the angel answered. . . ." The word *de* is not a temporal connective. It says nothing regarding the time between events. God's purpose in this section of scripture is not to denote the length of time involved, but to focus on the two Mary's and their experiences at the tomb. It is from the other Gospels we can learn more details regarding the time and the other women who became involved.

According to Mark 16:5, an angel was sitting to the right side in the sepulchre. This angel, a spiritual being, was a messenger from God who had come into concretion in the form of a man. That is why Mark refers to him as a "young man." His countenance was brilliant. His long garment was as white as snow.

The reaction of the women to this sight was one of great fear. The angel's first statement was a command: "Fear not!" Then he instructed the women to tell the disciples that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and that they should meet him in Galilee. With that the women turned to leave the sepulchre perplexed and

amazed at what they had seen and heard. But before they left, another phenomenal event occurred.

Luke 24:4-8:

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout. behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words.

The women had just seen the empty tomb and a “young man,” the angel, sitting; they heard the angel declare Jesus Christ’s resurrection and reiterate his instructions to go to Galilee. This was far different from the corpse they had expected to find that morning. It is easy to understand why the women were perplexed and in great wonder as they turned to leave the site of the tomb. Then, in Luke 24:4, they saw these two other angels standing by them. The phrase in Luke 24:4, “and it came to pass,” indicates that a period of time had elapsed since verse 3. Once again, Luke 24 is summarizing the events, not giving every detail. That is how the Gospels complement, add to, and illuminate each other. These two angels, brilliant in appearance, reaffirmed

what the first angel had just told them. Then the women remembered Jesus Christ’s words.

Mark 16:8:

And they went out quickly [“quickly” is omitted in most of the Greek texts], and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid [in awe].

Matthew 28:8:

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear [awe] and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Why did they now believe? Because the angels told them to remember the words Jesus had spoken unto them. The thought of Jesus Christ’s words regarding his resurrection had not even entered the women’s minds since the crucifixion. The angels’ words jarred their memories and then the women understood what had occurred. Overwhelmed, they ran to tell the disciples. The phrase “neither said they anything to any” means that they were so filled with awe and wonder, they told no one by the way as they ran to the disciples. Surely no one would have believed such a story. Besides, they wanted to deliver the good news to those who cared about Jesus as quickly as possible.

We must remember that we are still studying the events of Sunday morning. By the time these women had come to the sepulchre and began running to tell the disciples, the guards watching the tomb had recovered. When the guards saw the tomb empty and remembered

what had happened, they went into the city to inform the religious leaders.

Matthew 28: 11-15:

Now when they [the women] were going, behold, some of the watch [the men guarding the tomb] came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money [pay-off money] unto the soldiers,

Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

And if this come to the governor's [Pilate's] ears, we will persuade him, and secure you [so the guards would not be punished].

So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The religious leaders, including the chief priests and elders and Sanhedrin, bribed the soldiers to tell a false story. The soldiers were to say the body had been stolen while they were asleep so that no one would believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

The religious leaders had to have been both shocked and distressed by the report of the guards. This Galilean was going to haunt them even after his execution. The false story told by the guards that the body of Jesus had been stolen by his disciples was still being told and believed at the time the Gospel of Matthew was written. As a matter of fact, there are still people today who

believe that lie. But such stories will never change the reality that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. This is a lesson the religious leaders were to learn in the months and years ahead as Christianity spread.

While the guards were reporting to the chief priests and elders, the women found the disciples and began declaring unto them what had happened at the sepulchre and repeated to them what Jesus had said about meeting him in Galilee. The disciples' response was very human—unbelief. The idea that Jesus was alive was far too good to be true.

Luke 24:9-11:

And [the women] returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Luke 24 relates that the women told the men of the things they too had seen. Yet, the men still refused to believe. These were basically the same men who had deserted Jesus while the women had faithfully stayed near him on the day of his crucifixion. However, Peter himself had seen the empty tomb and grave wrappings that same day. Considering the tremendous significance

of what he had seen and now hearing the women's testimony, Peter took action.

Luke 24:12:

Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes [*othonion*] laid by themselves, and departed, wondering ["marvelling"] in himself at that which was come to pass.¹⁷

As of yet, Peter still had not seen Jesus Christ himself. However, he was astounded by the clear evidence that Jesus was really risen. Peter had been with Jesus throughout his ministry; he had seen Lazarus raised from the dead; he had heard Jesus predict his own death and resurrection; he had already seen the empty tomb with the grave clothes. Now he heard the women's testimony that they had seen him alive. Peter, after going to the tomb for a second look, began to fully realize the women were right. Jesus Christ indeed was risen! He left marvelling within himself as he considered the spectacular implications of what had occurred.

It was still Sunday, the eighteenth of Nisan.

Mark 16:12:

After that he [Jesus] appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

17. Some critical Greek texts omit verse 12, while others regard it as doubtful. Manuscript D (Bezae) and most old Latin manuscripts omit this verse. It is interesting that Bezae makes the omission, since it more often adds material rather than omits it.

Note that Jesus appeared in another form, indicating the variability of his resurrected body. The details of this walk and this appearance are greatly expanded in the Gospel of Luke. It is a beautiful record worthy of our study.

Luke 24: 13-16:

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

But their eyes were holden that they should not know him [their eyes were powerless to perceive exactly to whom they spoke].

Emmaus, a small village about seven miles from Jerusalem, was the destination of these two men walking from Jerusalem. When Jesus, in his resurrected body, joined them and began conversing with them, they did not recognize him.

Luke 24:17-20:

And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

Little did Cleopas know that Jesus Christ was the one walking with him. They had not really understood and believed the prophecy of his resurrection. The women remained unconvinced when they first saw the empty tomb and heard the angel in the sepulchre. Finally they believed after seeing two more angels at the sepulchre. In returning to tell the men they found that none of them would accept what they had to say. The men treated them as if they were talking nonsense. Now Cleopas and another disciple, on their way to Emmaus, conversed with Jesus face to face. Knowing they were oblivious to the reality that it was he, Jesus let the conversation develop.

This disciple related to Jesus how three days had passed since Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, and how with the passage of days, they had given up hope. That is the reason these two men were sad and disillusioned as they walked to Emmaus.

Luke 24:21-24:

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him [Jesus] they [Peter and the others] saw not.

The two disciples had been with the other men when the women had come that morning telling their story. They had been among those who did not believe. In verse 24, reference is made to certain of the disciples who looked into the report of the women about the empty tomb. This cannot refer to the visit of Peter and the other disciple in John 20:2-10, as that occurred before the women went to the tomb. It must refer to disciples who visited the tomb after the women's report in Luke 24:9-11, as in the record of Peter's second visit to the tomb in Luke 24:12.

These two disciples on the road to Emmaus still had not comprehended or believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead. The "stranger" listening to them finally reproved their unbelief.

Luke 24:25 and 26:

Then he [Jesus] said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

“To enter into his glory” refers to Jesus Christ’s entering into God’s presence in presenting himself as the firstfruits from the dead.

Luke 24:27:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] expounded unto them [the two disciples from Emmaus] in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

What a fellowship that must have been! Imagine Jesus Christ teaching just two disciples everything in the Old Testament pertaining to himself. Jesus went through the Scriptures and pointed out the truths concerning the Messiah. Despite all of this, the two men did not recognize who the man was with whom they spoke!

Luke 24:28 and 29:

And they [the three of them] drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he [Jesus] made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent, And he went in to tarry with them.

To “constrain,” as found in verse 29, was an Eastern way of inviting a guest to do something. On the first two requests a person would be expected to offer excuses for not being able to accept an offer. Finally, on the last request, the person would give in and accept the invitation. Jesus Christ was constrained by these two disciples from Emmaus to stay with them.

God’s Word spends more time on this resurrection appearance than on any other. Jesus Christ was the only person who has ever been raised from the dead to everlasting life. Yet he did not appear to men of great wealth or power. He did not appear to any kings. He did not appear to any of the recognized leaders of the religious establishment. Status, high or low, in one’s earthly life is not a basis for receiving the greatness of God’s Word and blessing. Jesus Christ appeared to two simple disciples who were having a difficult time understanding the events surrounding the death of the man whom they had believed would redeem Israel and thereby be their savior.

Luke 24:30-32:

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

The eyes that were opened were the eyes of their understanding. They realized the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection, and, while eating together, they finally recognized the person himself. What a startling, thrilling realization it must have been. They recalled how Jesus Christ’s explaining of God’s Word had caused

their hearts to burn within them. With that great excitement they went to tell the other disciples.

Luke 24:33 and 34:

And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven¹⁸ gathered together, and them that were with them,

Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

These verses are extremely vital to our understanding, and if we do not read them carefully, we can miss their meaning. Notice it was not the two disciples who gave the message that “the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” It was “the eleven” and the others “that were with them” talking it over. In Greek the word “saying” agrees in case with “the eleven” and “them that were with them”; it does not agree with “they rose up.”¹⁹ So what had occurred? As the two disciples hurriedly returned to Jerusalem, they found some of the other disciples gathered there. Some of these disciples were already excitedly telling the others, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.”

Simon refers to Simon Peter, the apostle. This is the only record in the Gospels informing us that Jesus appeared to Peter alone after the resurrection. The last

18. We shall see later that the missing twelfth apostle was Thomas, not Judas Iscariot.

19. The Greek word for “saying” is *legontas*; “the eleven” is *tous hendeka*; “them that were with them” is *tous sun autois*. All of these are used in the accusative case. However, “they rose up” is *anastantes* which is in the nominative case, agreeing with “they” *auto!*, in verse 35.

mention of Peter was at the sepulchre. He had checked the tomb once and then heard the story of the women. Having gone back to the tomb to look again, he left marvelling. Sometime between his leaving of the tomb, as recorded in Luke 24:12, and the arrival of the two men where the eleven were meeting (Luke 24:33-35), Jesus Christ appeared to Peter. This substantiates the record found in I Corinthians 15.

I Corinthians 15:4 and 5:

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve.

Returning to Luke 24, we learn that after the testimony of Jesus Christ’s appearance to Peter, the two who had seen him on the road to Emmaus then told their story.

Luke 24:35:

And they [this agrees with “they rose” of verse 33; it is Cleopas and the other disciple] told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Despite the wonderful testimonies being related, were the listeners believing any of it? No! This truth is further stated in the Gospel of Mark, regarding the same situation.

Mark 16:12 and 13:

After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

It makes one wonder what God has to do to convince people. By this time all had been reminded that Jesus had said he would get up, All had heard others talk about the empty tomb. There was absolutely no excuse for any follower's unbelief; yet not only did the majority of disciples not believe, but they were also full of fear.

John 20:19:

Then the same day at evening [around sunset] ,being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews . . .

The gathered disciples had closed the doors for fear of the Judeans. There had been Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and now two other disciples (who had been on the road to Emmaus) claiming that the risen Christ had been seen. Yet none of their .listeners believed. The disciples had been given the instructions to go to Galilee, but they had not done so. They were too bound by fear and unbelief. That was the context in which Jesus Christ made his next appearance.

John 20: 19:

. . . when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

Luke 24: 36-38:

And as they [Cleopas and the other disciple] thus spake, Jesus

himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts [reasonings] arise in your hearts?

Mark 16:14:

Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Matthew 28:9 and 10:20

. . . behold, Jesus met them [the disciples of verse 8], saying, All hail. And they [the disciples] came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

The eleven of Mark 16:14 must have included both Peter and Judas, because we shall see that Thomas was not present to see the risen Christ.²¹ Besides the eleven apostles, other disciples were also present. Despite Christ's appearance in their midst when they were behind closed doors, despite his exhortation for them to have peace, they were still full of fear and could not

20. The words "And as they went to tell his disciples" are omitted in Matthew 28:9 according to most significant Aramaic and Greek sources. The word "them" is masculine in at least one manuscript. The context and the other Gospels show this parallels with his appearance to the disciples that evening. Matthew 28:11-15 then goes back to recount events occurring after the women visited the tomb.

21. This corresponds to the eleven of Luke 24:33.

believe it was truly he, Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. How much proof and reassurance did these disciples need? Jesus Christ first reproved their unbelief and then let them touch him. Then he instructed them to tell the other brethren to go to Galilee where they could see him.

Luke 24:39 and 40:

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

John 20:20:

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

He had to let them look at and touch him to convince them it was really he. They were so confused and perplexed. Jesus took all measures to convince them of his resurrection. Isn't that a great record? Now let's observe their response.

Luke 24:41-44:

And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Jesus Christ demonstrated that he could still eat. When Christ returns for us of the Church of Grace, we too will acquire a body like unto his resurrected body. This resurrected body is a body we know very little about except for what we can observe from reading about Jesus Christ's body before his ascension. Our physical bodies now have life because of our souls, our breath. According to I Corinthians 15:44 and 45, our spiritual bodies will be energized by a life-giving spirit.

Besides showing the marks on his body and eating with the disciples, Jesus Christ taught them about his fulfilling those things written about him in the Books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Among those things were his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and his glory. His mission as the Passover lamb was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Also foreshadowed was the fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks, known as Pentecost, for on Pentecost all was to be fulfilled so that believers would be able to receive power from on high, the gift of holy spirit. Pentecost was fifty days away, and it was about this that Jesus Christ was next to instruct them.

John 20:21-24:

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on *them* ["he breathed in" is the text; omit "them"], and saith unto them, Receive [*lambanō*] ye the Holy Ghost [holy spirit]:

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Jesus Christ gave them specific instructions about what to do when the gift of holy spirit became available. They were to begin breathing in when the time was right. Then they would receive (Greek: *lambanō*) the gift of holy spirit. *Lambanō* means to receive into evidence or manifestation. Later we shall see in Acts 2:1-4 that on Pentecost they breathed in deeply and manifested the holy spirit by speaking in tongues. On that same day Peter would carry out the instruction in John 20:23 by offering to the people God's way of receiving remission of sins.²²

Verse 24 of John 20 states that Thomas was not present. However, Mark 16:14 and Luke 24:33 told us that eleven of the apostles were at this meal and appearance. This means that neither of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus could have been Peter or any of the other twelve apostles, for they returned to find "the eleven" (Luke 24:33).

22. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Many have claimed that Judas had either killed himself or been expelled from the group by this time. That also is a false conclusion. Since only Thomas was absent, Judas was here with the eleven on the eighteenth of Nisan as recorded in Mark 16:14. God's Word plainly shows that after the resurrection, Jesus Christ accepted Judas back into the fellowship. Would you and I have forgiven Judas to that extent? The other apostles also accepted Judas into the fellowship. However, it is very doubtful that they fully comprehended Judas' complicity and betrayal until after Christ's ascension, We shall see this later.

John 20:24 concludes the known events of the eighteenth of Nisan, On this day Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene at the garden of the sepulchre; he then presented himself to the Lord as the firstfruits from the dead; he appeared to Simon Peter; he appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus; and finally he appeared to eleven apostles (Thomas being absent) along with some other disciples. Several times angels had been seen who declared the glorious news of Jesus Christ's resurrection and gave instructions. The empty tomb convinced some and perplexed others. The guards were bribed by the religious leaders to start false rumors that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body. It was a day full of tremendous events. it is a day that has gone down in history as the day mankind first knew its savior had

conquered death, for the words “he is risen,” first spoken at the empty tomb, have reverberated universally ever since. What a victorious message this is.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE RESURRECTION THROUGH THE ASCENSION: THE FORTY DAYS

Jesus Christ remained on the earth for forty days in his resurrected body. His appearances to people on the first day that he showed himself alive were set forth in the previous chapter. In this chapter we will study God’s Word for knowledge concerning the other thirty-nine days until Christ’s ascension.

Thomas had been absent when Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples on Sunday evening. Sometime after Jesus left the supper on that evening ending the eighteenth of Nisan, the eleven disciples went to Galilee as Jesus Christ had instructed.

Matthew 28:16:

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

THE FORTY DAYS**FIRST MONTH (NISAN OR ABIB)**

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	I 14	15	16	II 17
III 18 1	19 2	20 3	21 4	22 5	23 6	24 7
25 8	26 9	IV 27 10	28 11	29 12	30 13	

Evidently, Thomas had returned to his native Galilee. There the eleven reunited with him and told him of Christ's appearance.

John 20:25

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he [Thomas] said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

This was the reason Thomas got his reputation as "doubting Thomas." But when compared to the earlier scepticism of the others, Thomas was no more doubtful

TO THE ASCENSION***SECOND MONTH**

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
						1 14
2 15	3 16	4 17	5 18	6 19	7 20	8 21
9 22	10 23	11 24	12 25	13 26	14 27	15 28
16 29	17 30	18 31	19 32	20 33	21 34	22 35
23 36	24 37	25 38	26 39	V 27 40	28	29

KEY

I. . . Crucifixion

II. . . Resurrection

III. . . First of the Resurrection Appearances

IV. . . Appearance to Twelve

V. . . Ascension

*This represents the Hebrew calendar for the first two months during the year Christ was crucified. For convenience, modern names are given for the days of the week.

than the rest of them had been before they saw and touched Jesus. When Thomas finally did see Jesus, he believed also.

John 20:26-29:

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

The above passage is full of meaning. Eight days after his first appearance, Jesus came to his disciples once again. They were again behind closed doors.

This appearance of Jesus was surely for the benefit of Thomas who had not yet seen him. In reference to Thomas' argument of disbelief, Jesus invited Thomas to scrutinize him and to touch his wounded hands and side.

Thomas exclaimed in great reverence, "My Lord and my God!" This exclamation was not a statement saying that he believed Jesus to be God. Rather it was a declaration of awe and reverence, characteristic of the Eastern culture when speaking of one who represented

God. There are many Biblical examples where a person is called "god" because he represents God to the people. A man who had servants would be called "lord," meaning "master." In the East a woman would at times call her husband "lord" or "god" because he represented God to her. Thomas was by no means trying to document a triune God. He knew Jesus was the Son of God, not God Himself. His exclamation was a reverential expression characteristic of his Semitic culture.¹

Linguistically, the phrase "My Lord and my God" is a figure of speech in which two nouns are used to describe one thing. It is the figure *hendiadys*. In this figure one of the nouns increases in intensity the other noun to the superlative degree. When you apply this to Thomas' declaration, the essence of it was, "My godly lord!" Thomas most emphatically declared his submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Thomas believed because of what he had seen. After the ascension, it was no longer possible for anyone to see Jesus Christ and touch his side and hands. Since then men have had to believe in Jesus Christ's resurrection without physically beholding him. That is the great accuracy of God's Word in this section.

John 20:30 and 31:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

1. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1975), pp. 34-35.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Verse 31 clearly states God's purpose in recording the previous scriptures. They were written so that people would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. That is why Thomas' statement "My Lord and my God!" was recorded by God in His Word. It was not written with the intent that people would believe that Jesus is God, but the Son of God.

Verse 30 of John 20 makes us aware of another great truth. There were many events during these forty days which are not recorded. We can only know of the ones God has revealed to us in His Word.

The first time Jesus Christ appeared to his gathered disciples was on the eighteenth of Nisan and the second recorded time was after eight more days had passed, on the twenty-seventh of Nisan. On this latter appearance, Thomas finally saw the risen Christ. This appearance is also recorded in Matthew 28:17-20.

Matthew 28:17-20:

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

And Jesus came [having come] and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world [age]. Amen.

This is the first record since the resurrection of Jesus Christ where he tells his followers to go out and make disciples of others, even the Gentiles. The phrase "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" has been the source of much confusion. The authenticity of this phrase has been questioned by many because there is no scriptural evidence that this type of baptism was ever carried out. Throughout the Book of Acts people were baptized with the holy spirit in the name of Jesus Christ. Never were they baptized with the trinitarian formula given above.

There is evidence from the early writings of the Church fathers who quoted this verse that the phrase "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" was not in the original text. Instead, it simply read, ". . . make disciples of all nations in my name, teaching them. . . ." Aphraates of Nisibis (around 340 A.D.) quoted the verse without the words "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Eusebius (who died around 340 A.D.) quoted this verse eighteen times without using those words. There is evidence that Justin Martyr, who lived in the mid-second century, did

not have these words in his manuscripts.² These men were quoting from manuscripts that were older than any that we now have. This clearly indicates that the original of Matthew 28:19 read, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations in my name,” The rest was added later.

After giving this exhortation, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations in my name,” Christ assured them that he would ever be present with them. This concludes the record of his appearance to his disciples on the mountain in Galilee.

After seeing Jesus Christ, a few of the disciples went down to the Sea of Galilee to do some fishing. This was a natural thing to do, as they would need to eat something, and many of them were fishermen by trade.

John 21:1:

After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

This verse introduces and summarizes the resurrection appearance recorded here in the twenty-first chapter of

2. Fred C. Conybeare, “The Eusebian form of the Text Matth. 28, 19,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums*, 1901, pp. 275-288; F.C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism* (London: Watts & Co., 1910), pp. 65-77; Eberhard Nestle, ed., *Novum Testamentum*, rev. by Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, 25th ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1969), p. 83; Aphraates *Demonstrations* 1.8; Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2d ser. vol. 13 (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1898), p. 347; and Burkitt, *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, 1:172-173. Also see Arthur Vööbus, *Liturgical Traditions In the Didache* (Stockholm: Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 16, 1968), pp. 35-39.

John. The Sea of Tiberias is the Sea of Galilee.³ This was the first appearance of Jesus to his disciples while they were in Galilee.

John 21:2:

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

Only seven disciples witnessed this appearance, five of whom we know were apostles. The rest may have remained at the mountain designated by Jesus.

John 21:3:

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Peter was a leader, that is why others followed him. However, on this particular fishing expedition they caught nothing.

John 21:4-7:

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

3. It was called the Sea of Tiberias by those who lived in the vicinity of Tiberias, a city built by the Romans on the west side of the lake.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

With a few words from the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter was quickly convinced that the person calling to them from the shore was the Master. He put on his fisherman's coat and jumped into the water.

John 21:8-11:

And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

The disciples were only about one hundred yards from the shore. As they brought in their spectacular catch, they found Jesus calmly on the shore with a fire and fish already prepared.

John 21:12-17:

Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing it was the Lord.

Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these [referring to the fish]? He [Peter] saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He [Jesus] saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Three times Jesus Christ asked Peter a challenging question: "Peter, do you love me more than these fish?" Each time Peter responded, "Lord, you know I love you." Jesus Christ was constraining Peter to walk with greater and greater love and dedication to his master.

Three times Jesus responded to Peter's replies by challenging him with responsibility. Most Western readers gloss over this section and conclude that Jesus repeated the same challenge each time: "Feed my sheep." However, according to the texts and custom, each challenge concerned a distinct category of sheep. Jesus told Peter to feed his male lambs, his female lambs, and all of his adult sheep.

The instructions were complete: “If you really love me, Peter, feed my male lambs, my female lambs, and my adult sheep.” This was the responsibility with which Jesus was charging Peter. Peter would have to see that young men and women were nourished on God’s Word. He was also to see that adults of both sexes were given a quality diet of God’s Word and pastored faithfully. After Pentecost, Peter began to fulfill this responsibility.

John 21:18:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.

Jesus Christ was illustrating a great truth in teaching Peter the responsibility he soon would have. The reference to the young man who girded himself refers to a person who does not accept responsibility, but does whatever he wants. The reference to the old man who would be girded by someone other than himself refers to a person who has taken on responsibility given him by another. He is responsible to do what another says to do. He is clothed as another desires for him to be clothed. He is under the care and guidance of another and is to obey him. This was to be Peter’s calling as a bondservant to Jesus Christ, responsible for leading God’s people.

John 21:19:

This spake he, signifying by what [by what means] death

[omit “death”] he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Evidence from old Greek cursive manuscripts indicates the word “death” was not in the original.⁴ In context the reading makes much more sense without the interpolated word “death.” The context is that of service, not of death. Death is never a glory. Jesus Christ said that Peter would glorify God by serving responsibly under the care and guidance of Jesus Christ, not by dying. That is why Jesus then gave Peter the same command as he had when he first called Peter, “Follow me.” This was his call to service. By Pentecost, Peter would have to be a strong, unwavering leader of God’s people. That is what Jesus Christ was building into Peter’s life in this record.

John 21:20:

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

The disciple whom Jesus loved had leaned on Jesus Christ’s breast at Jesus’ last supper before the crucifixion. Upon Peter’s request, this disciple had asked Jesus who the betrayer was. In verse 20, there is a parenthetical digression starting with “which” and going to the end of

4. MS 1342 omits the word “death” in this passage. A marginal note in MS 31 declares that other ancient sources also give this reading without the word “death.” Some manuscripts omit the passage (“This spake . . . spoken this”) entirely. These include MS5 1226, 1238, and 2181.

the verse. These words explain and further identify the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was the same disciple read about in John 13:21-25. Peter looked at this disciple and became curious as to what that disciple would do.

John 21:21:

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?

Jesus had just charged Peter with great responsibility when he said, "Follow me." But instead of focusing on his own responsibility, Peter began questioning Jesus on the responsibility of this other disciple.

John 21:22:

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

Jesus, in essence, said: "Peter, quit worrying about everybody else. You carry out your own responsibility. If I want this other disciple to remain until I come back, what business is it of yours? Stop getting into other people's business and follow me!"

John 21:23:

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

Isn't it incredible that they so misinterpreted Jesus' words? But they did.

Nowhere in this chapter has God's Word identified and named the disciple "whom Jesus loved." It had to be one of the seven disciples who went fishing. All but two of those disciples were named. If one were Lazarus and he is referred to in verse 23, then Peter's question, Jesus' reply, and their misunderstanding of his reply are easily explained.

Lazarus had been raised from the dead by Jesus and become one of his most dearly loved disciples. In being raised from the dead, he had that in common with Jesus. This might explain why Peter would be wondering about him. It would also explain why the disciples thought that he too, like Jesus, would not again die. Since he had been raised from the dead, perhaps he too would live forever. They misunderstood Jesus' words because of their own reasoning.

John 21:24 and 25:

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

This verse cannot be used to prove that John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The "disciple" of verse 24 does not necessarily refer to "the disciple whom Jesus loved." That is an unwarranted assumption. Verses 24 and 25 form a unit as a closing to the Gospel.

As verse 25 so clearly states, Jesus Christ did so many, many more things than are written in the Gospel of John.

I Corinthians 15 lists several of Jesus Christ's resurrection appearances.

I Corinthians 15:4-8:

And that he was buried, and that he rose [has been raised] again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve:

And that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that, he was seen of James; then of all of the apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me [Paul] also, as of one born out of due time.

This passage of scripture records in chronological order six of Jesus Christ's appearances; not all of these are found in the Gospels. Note the accuracy of this record in I Corinthians 15. The appearance to Peter occurred between the time Peter went to the tomb a second time and the time the two disciples came back from the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:12,33,34). The appearance to the twelve apostles refers to his appearance eight days later when Thomas was present (John 20:26-29). Judas was not yet replaced, so he must have been there. The appearance to over five hundred brethren

is not directly stated in the Gospels. Neither is Jesus' appearance to James. We only know that these two appearances occurred some time after he appeared in John 21. The appearance to "all the apostles" of I Corinthians 15:7 may refer to his appearance to them on the day of the ascension. Judas again must have been present. Finally, Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus several years after the ascension, as recorded in Acts 9. How accurately I Corinthians 15 corroborates and fits with the Gospel records and with the Book of Acts. The days of his appearances were among the most exciting in history. By the time he ascended, Jesus Christ had left no reason for doubt that indeed he was risen.

To see what God's Word reveals about Jesus Christ's ascension, we must study the first chapter of the Book of Acts.

Acts 1:1 and 2:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

The former treatise refers to the Gospel of Luke, both Acts and Luke having been written by the same person. The word *Theophilus* is not necessarily a proper name. It can correctly be translated, "beloved of God."

Luke and Acts were written for those that are beloved of God. The Gospel of Luke covered many things Jesus Christ did and taught until the day of the ascension, “the day in which he was taken up.” The Book of Acts continues the record beginning from the day of the ascension. On that day he gave some specific, important commandments to the apostles “whom he had chosen.” This tells us those twelve must have been there, including Judas, for he had chosen all twelve. We have further substantiated this by indicating that Judas was present for at least two of the previous appearances. Judas had not yet committed suicide, and he was still fellowshipping with Jesus Christ and with the other disciples. That certainly demonstrates the grace of God, manifested in the actions of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Realizing that all twelve apostles were present at Jesus Christ’s ascension, we must follow with precision the pronouns referring to them throughout these verses in Acts.

Acts 1:3:

To whom [to the twelve apostles] also he shewed himself alive after his passion [his death] by many infallible proofs, being seen of them [during] forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

This documents Jesus Christ’s presence on the earth for forty days after his resurrection. During this period, beginning with the eighteenth of Nisan, he appeared to the twelve as well as other disciples several times. He

showed himself alive by “many infallible proofs.” Over five hundred people saw him during this time, some saw him more than once. There is not one historical record of any of the witnesses claiming the resurrection to be a “hoax.” Nor do any of the witnesses contradict each other’s testimony. These men and women were not insane or emotionally disturbed. They were not hallucinating. By the record of God’s Word itself, they themselves had a difficult time believing what they saw. Yet over five hundred saw him at once. And by the end of the forty days, all were convinced that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.

All these accounts name primary witnesses of the resurrected Christ because they actually saw him in person. In a court of law the testimony of a primary witness is much more creditable than the testimony of those who were not at the event. If you witnessed a car accident and testified to it, a judge would give weight to your testimony. If someone who had not been at the scene of the accident surfaced two years later and claimed the wreck had never occurred, the judge would not accept his testimony. In fact, such a testimony would be thrown out of court as an unfounded hypothesis by a secondary witness.

We must be that honest with Christ’s resurrection. Over five hundred people saw the resurrected Christ. Some saw the empty tomb and graveclothes. In the New Testament we have the written records of some of these first-hand witnesses. Historical references from that

period speak of it.⁵ Despite all of this, many people have chosen to accept the testimony of people who live almost two thousand years later and who claim that Jesus was not resurrected by God. Such is the inconsistency in the human mind.

In addition to there having been hundreds of first-hand witnesses of the resurrected Christ, the manifestation of the power of the holy spirit is proof to the born-again Christian today that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.⁶ When all is considered, the evidence for the resurrection is indisputable and undeniable. It is so clear and simple that even a fool need not err therein.

Not all the appearances of Jesus Christ were recorded. But we do have a record of his final appearance before his ascension here in Acts 1. Again, Jesus Christ's disciples were with him in the Jerusalem area. On this occasion he gave the apostles his final instructions.

Acts 1:4 and 5:

And, being assembled together with *them* [the twelve apostles], commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for [until] the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with [in] the Holy Ghost [holy spirit] not many days hence.

Other information about this same occasion is found in Luke 24. Remember, the event at hand is the ascension.

5. Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3.3; also Whiston, *Josephus: Complete Works*, p. 379.

6. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today*, 6th ed. (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1972).

Luke 24:45-49:

Then opened he [Jesus Christ] their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And ye are witnesses of these things.

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

What great promises Jesus Christ was making to the apostles. This record in Luke 24 is placed right after the appearance forty days earlier, it also having occurred in Jerusalem. Luke is simply summarizing events that happened over a long period of time at the same location with basically the same people.

Both Luke 24 and Acts 1 relate that Jesus told his apostles of the promise of the Father. In Acts it was called the baptism of the holy spirit. In Luke it was called being clothed or endued with power from on high. Jesus was again instructing the twelve about the greatness of what they were about to receive in a few days. Despite Jesus' teaching them, the apostles did not yet understand the greatness that was to come. They could not grasp what Jesus was saying.

Acts 1:6 and 7:

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

The apostles were still wondering about Christ's future kingdom. They did not realize the magnitude of the promise of the holy spirit which had just been made to them, so they sidetracked the topic. But rather than angrily reproving them, Jesus simply said that no one knew when the kingdom would be restored to Israel. The authority for that restoration was God's and God's alone. Only God knows when Jesus Christ will return and reestablish that kingdom. Having said this, Jesus Christ returned to his topic of Acts 1:4 and 5, namely, the receiving of the holy spirit and its effects.⁷

Acts 1:8:

But ye [the twelve apostles] shall receive [*lambanō*, receive into manifestation] power [*dunamis*, inherent power], after [when] that the Holy Ghost [holy spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Jesus Christ was preparing all twelve apostles, including Judas, for what was to come about in a few days. If Judas had obeyed these instructions, he too would have

7. Wierwille, *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today*, pp. 65-73.

been filled with the power of the holy spirit. That is the great forgiveness and grace of our lord! But Judas committed suicide before Pentecost arrived. Perhaps it was at this time of the final instruction, just before ascending into heaven, that Jesus Christ gave the following exhortation found in Mark 16.

Mark 16:15-18:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized [baptized with the holy spirit] shall be saved [made whole]; but he that believeth not shall be damned [judged].

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They [in context it means "If they. . . ."⁸] shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

By their believing, the apostles would be able to stop the ill effects of any poisonous liquid they might accidentally drink. By believing, they would be able to cast out devils and speak in tongues. By believing, they would be able to receive revelation to lay hands on people and heal them. These are some of the great ways by which God would confirm His Word as they preached

8. An example of accidentally taking up a serpent is found in Acts 28:3-6. *Nowhere* does God's Word teach us to intentionally handle snakes as "a test of faith."

it to every creature. These powers would be available to those who would be filled with the power of the holy spirit and believe. Aren't those tremendous promises?

Mark 16:19:

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Luke 24:50 and 51:

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

And it came to pass, while he blessed [was blessing] them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9:

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Jesus Christ led the apostles from Jerusalem to the other side of the Mount of Olives, as far as Bethany. On the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, there is a secluded area overlooking the village of Bethany. They were not in sight of Jerusalem. They were not at the traditional site of the ascension over which a shrine is now located. That traditional site today sits on top of the Mount of Olives, completely out of sight of Bethany but in full view of Jerusalem. Once again we see the great error introduced which has been perpetrated by tradition. People have consistently failed to adhere to the accuracy and integrity of God's Word.

Jesus Christ raised his hands and blessed the disciples. While he was yet blessing them, he was taken up into

heaven and a cloud received him out of their sight. The apostles beheld him as he went up.

Acts 1:10:

And while they [the twelve apostles] looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.

The pronoun "them" again refers to the apostles whom Jesus had chosen, mentioned in verse 2. All twelve, including Judas, witnessed the ascension. It was a singular, unparalleled, dramatic event. After he was out of sight, they were still gazing upwards in enraptured awe. Two angels, coming into visible form as men, stood next to them. The angels' words reveal some interesting truths.

Acts 1:11:

Which [the angels] also said, Ye men of Galilee. . .

These words should have caught our attention long ago. So far, God's Word has clearly set forth that all twelve apostles witnessed the ascension. Yet, just after it happened, the angels spoke only to the "men of Galilee." Judas Iscariot,⁹ the only non-Galilean, a Judean, was gone. This pinpoints the time at which Judas left the other eleven. After seeing Jesus at least three times in the past forty days, after being forgiven by him and accepted in the fellowship with the apostles, after being

9. Iscariot means "man of Kerioth," which was a town in Judea.

promised the power of the holy spirit, and finally, after witnessing the ascension, Judas Iscariot could no longer cope with life. After witnessing the ascension of the one he had betrayed, Judas Iscariot left to commit suicide.

Meanwhile, the angels had an important message for these Galileans.

Acts 1:11:

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

God's very first declaration after Jesus Christ ascended was the truth that he would come back—the hope of his return. He will return. The skeptics did not deter his coming the first time, nor will they the second time. With this hope of the return in mind, the disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait until they received the promise of the Father.

Thus conclude the events from the resurrection through the ascension. During these forty days many disciples repeatedly doubted what they had heard and even what they had seen, even though Jesus Christ had gone to great lengths to convince them. After he had proved himself alive beyond a shadow of a doubt, with “many infallible proofs,” this great period culminated with his ascension. From this time on it became the disciples' responsibility to declare his resurrection, his

ascension, and his eventual return. But first the apostles must obey the instructions Jesus had given. For there in Jerusalem in a few days they would receive the greatest gift God has ever given: the power of the holy spirit.

PART III

JESUS CHRIST OUR VICTORY

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ASCENSION THROUGH PENTECOST: THE TEN DAYS

The use of numbers in the Bible is always very significant. Man often uses numbers haphazardly, but God uses them always with a divine, instructive purpose. Forty denotes a period of probation, trial, and proving. Jesus Christ was on earth forty days in his resurrected body, proving himself to be alive by many infallible proofs. He had begun his ministry being proved for forty days of temptation in the wilderness. During the forty days before the ascension, mankind was in a period of probation during which it would decide whether or not to believe that Christ was risen.¹

Biblically, ten represents ordinal perfection and is a multiple of five, the number of grace. On the tenth day

1. The rain during Noah's flood poured down for forty days. Moses, in receiving the tablets of the Law and the revelation of the tabernacle, was on Mt. Sinai forty days. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

THE FORTY DAYS TO THE ASCENSION**FIRST MONTH (NISAN OR ABIB)**

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	I 14	15	16	II 17
III 18 1	19 2	20 3	21 4	22 5	23 6	24 7
25 8	26 9	IV 27 10	28 11	29 12	30 13	

KEY

I. . . . Crucifixion

II. . . . Resurrection

III. . . . First of the Resurrection Appearances

IV. . . . Appearance to Twelve

V. . . . Ascension

VI. . . . Pentecost

*This represents the Hebrew calendar for the first two months during the year Christ was crucified. For convenience, modern names are given for the days of the week.

AND THE COUNTING TO PENTECOST***SECOND MONTH**

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
						1 14
2 15	3 16	4 17	5 18	6 19	7 20	8 21
9 22	10 23	11 24	12 25	13 26	14 27	15 28
16 29	17 30	18 31	19 32	20 33	21 34	22 35
23 36	24 37	25 38	26 39	V 27 40	28 41	29 42

THIRD MONTH

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
1 43	2 44	3 45	4 46	5 47	6 48	7 49
VI 8 50	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

after the ascension came Pentecost, when the administration of the Church, the one Body of Christ, was established. With the coming of Pentecost and God's giving of the holy spirit, any person, Judean or Gentile, could be born again of God's Spirit. Anyone and everyone who desired to believe could receive eternal life, power from on high, holy spirit. This would mark the beginning of the Administration of Grace.

Before we study the great significance of Pentecost, let us go back and study the events of the intervening days between Christ's ascension and the day of Pentecost.

Luke 24:52:

And they worshipped [having worshipped] him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

Acts 1:12:

Then returned they [the eleven apostles; Judas is now gone] unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

Having beheld Christ's ascension from the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives at Bethany, the apostles returned to Jerusalem "with great joy." They were, no doubt, absolutely astounded by Christ's being taken up into heaven and in deep thought over the final information he had given them.

Acts 1:13:

And when they [the apostles] were come in [to Jerusalem], they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter,

and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother of James*.

The upper room was the place they abode, which means they ate and slept there. Notice that only eleven apostles are listed in Acts 1:13; Judas Iscariot's name is missing. By listing these names God calls our attention to the truth that Judas was no longer among the apostles.

Acts 1:14:

These all [the eleven men listed in verse 13] continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

This prayer and supplication with the women could not have taken place in the upper room. Eastern culture would not allow a woman in the living quarters of a man unless she was married to him. So where did these people continue "with one accord in prayer and supplication"? The Gospel of Luke gives the answer.

Luke 24:53:

And [the apostles] were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

A few weeks before, these same apostles had been behind closed doors, literally hiding for fear of the Judeans. But by this time after the ascension, they were ridding themselves of such debilitating fear. Now with great joy and openness these same men were daily in the

Temple, praising and blessing God. As Christ had commanded them, they were waiting until the promised baptism of the holy spirit would be given to them. Jesus Christ had not told them the exact day on which they would be given the promise of the Father, but that it would come “not many days hence.”

Acts 1:15-18:

And in those days [the days between the ascension and Pentecost] Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he [Judas] was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

Now this man [Judas] purchased a field [*chorion*, property] with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

The focus of the apostles' concern at this time was Judas. This is very logical when we realize that Judas had left the others not long before this, when Jesus Christ had ascended. Upon leaving, Judas went to a property he had purchased. This property, *chōrion*, was different from the land the priests bought with the thirty pieces of silver, recorded in Matthew 27:7-10. The land bought by the priests was called an *agros*, a field. It was an entirely different type of land for it

was used as a place to bury strangers. The property of Acts 1:18 was purchased by Judas himself, not the priests. He bought it with “the reward of iniquity.” This “reward of iniquity” was not the thirty pieces of silver, for he had thrown them down in the Temple. This “reward of iniquity” was money he had stolen out of the money bag as treasurer of the apostles.

John 12:6:

. . . he [Judas] was a thief, and had the bag, and bare [carried off] what was put therein.

As recorded in Acts 1:18, Peter graphically described the suicide of Judas. The description fits a death in which the person impales himself on a sharp instrument. Upon seeing Christ ascend to heaven, the condemnation in Judas' heart opened his mind to possession, and he immediately went to his own property and killed himself.

Acts 1:19:

And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field [*chōrion*] is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field [*chōrion*] of blood.

That land became known as Aceldama, meaning “the property of blood,” because Judas had killed himself there; that is where his blood was shed.

Acts 1:20:

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be

desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Peter was now preparing the about 120 disciples for the replacement of Judas, to let another take Judas' leadership position. If Judas Iscariot had left or killed himself long before, why would the apostles just now decide to replace him? Or if Judas had killed himself before Christ's ascension, why wouldn't Jesus have carried out the prophecy of Psalms and have named a replacement himself? However, when we realize that Judas was with them to the ascension, the replacing of Judas at this time fits perfectly. Judas was replaced after the ascension and before Pentecost, within a few days after he left their company on the day of the ascension and killed himself.

Acts 1:21 and 22:

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

The major requirement was not that the one replacing Judas need to have actually witnessed the crucifixion; nor was it that he be from a certain area, of a certain lineage, or have a certain amount of money or influence. Neither was the man's good works the credentials. The major requirement was that Judas' replacement be a

disciple who had been with Jesus from the time of Jesus' baptism by John through his ascension, a witness of the resurrected Christ.

Acts 1:23-26:

And they appointed [made to stand] two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether [if either] of these two thou hast chosen,

That he may take [*lambanō*] part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell [transgressed], that he [Judas] might go to his own place [his own property where he killed himself].

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon [was for] Matthias; and he [Matthias] was numbered with the eleven apostles.

So Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. Peter's speech and the account of choosing a twelfth apostle are recorded in Acts 1:15-26. These events did not occur on Pentecost. They occurred in the days between the ascension and Pentecost.

Acts 1:15 does not specify the location where this choosing of a twelfth apostle took place, but it could not have been in an upper room in which only eleven men lived, for it says that about 120 were present.

People have taught that 120 disciples chose the twelfth apostle on Pentecost in the upper room. When will people read God's Word? No one can handle God's

Word that way and expect to stand approved before God. We are to rightly divide the Word of Truth if we are to have the true Word. If we cannot be trusted to rightly divide God's Word in simple matters like this, how can we be expected to be accurate when God's Word instructs us on spiritual matters of eternal importance? We must become craftsmen in handling God's Word.

Before we study this wonderful Pentecost following Christ's ascension, it is essential that we have a background of information about the Old Testament Pentecost. First of all, Pentecost was a feast of the children of Israel. "Pentecost" is taken from the Greek word *pentēkostē*, meaning fiftieth. In the Old Testament three other names are given for this feast: it was called the "Feast of Harvest," the "Day of the Firstfruits," and the "Feast of Weeks." By New Testament times "Pentecost" had become the popular term used for this feast.

The derivation of all four of these names is actually simple to understand. We can understand the term "Pentecost" by observing its timing in relation to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread one weekly Sabbath would always be included. The day after that weekly Sabbath (the date would vary from year to year) would be the first day in the counting of fifty days toward Pentecost. "Pentecost" was so named because of this fifty days of counting. The Judeans would count seven weeks or

forty-nine days; then the next day, the fiftieth (which would always be a Sunday in our time reckoning), was Pentecost. Because of this method of counting seven weeks plus one day, it was also called the "Feast of Weeks."

In the Old Testament—there were three major feasts in the year, all these feasts including the celebration of a harvest. The first harvest was celebrated in Nisan during the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Hebrews brought a sheaf of barley for the wave-offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest. The day of the wave-offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was the day when the Judeans began counting toward Pentecost.

The second harvest celebration was the wheat harvest at the Feast of Harvest, Pentecost. This feast occurred in the third month, in the summer of the year. This feast was also called the Day of the Firstfruits (not to be confused with the firstfruits wave-offering during the Feast of Unleavened Bread) because the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were being celebrated.

The third harvest celebration was designated as the Feast of Tabernacles in the middle of the seventh month. This final harvest, including the harvest of grapes, was at the end of the agricultural year, before Winter. It was also known as the Feast of Ingathering.

Not only did these three major feasts celebrate the three times of harvest, they also commemorated three great events in the history of Israel. The first, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, celebrated the exodus of Israel

THE THREE

Name of Feast	Scriptures	Time of Feast
1. Feast of Unleavened Bread	Exodus 12:15-20 Leviticus 23:6-8 Numbers 28:17-25 Deuteronomy 16:3-4, 8	Spring (First Month): Nisan 15-21; seven-day feast
2. Feast of Weeks; Feast of Harvest; Day of Firstfruits; Pentecost	Exodus 23:15-17 Leviticus 23:15-22 Numbers 28:26-31 Deuteronomy 18:9-12	Summer (Third Month): on 50th day after wave-offering of first month; on Sunday between Sivan 6 and Sivan 12; on-day feast
3. Feast of Tabernacles Feast of Ingathering	Exodus 23:15-17 Leviticus 23:33-44 Numbers 29:12-40 Deuteronomy 16:13-17	Fall (Seventh Month): Ethamin (or Tishri) 15-21; seven-day feast

from the bondage of Egypt. The second, Pentecost, was traditionally believed by Judeans to mark the time when God first revealed the law to Israel at Mount Sinai. That Pentecost and the giving of the law were both in the third month is indicated by scripture.² The third feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, was a seven-day feast commemorating God's watchful care over Israel as they wandered in the wilderness forty years.³

Although the law outlined three major feasts, for our present purposes Pentecost is the one being focused on. The following are God's commandments to Israel

2. Exodus 19:1 states that the children of Israel arrived at Sinai "in the third month." Shortly thereafter, probably that same month, the law was given as recorded in Exodus 20. Since Pentecost was fifty days from the middle of Nisan, it also would fall in the third month.

3. The observance of all three major feasts is outlined detail in Leviticus 23.

MAJOR FEASTS

Harvest Celebrated	Past Event Commemorated	Future Event Illustrated
Barley Harvest: Wave-offering of firstfruits on day after weekly Sabbath during the feast	Exodus from Egypt	Resurrection of Christ as firstfruits from the dead
Wheat Harvest	Giving of law at Mt. Sinai	Giving of holy spirit on Pentecost; firstfruits of spirit
Final Harvest of all crops at end of agricultural year	God's care for Israel during forty years in wilderness	Resurrections of just and unjust as the harvest at the end of the world

concerning the celebration of this feast. All of the following scriptures are necessary to gain a full understanding of God's original instructions to the children of Israel concerning the observance of Pentecost.

Exodus 12:15-20:

And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou has sown in the field. . .

Deuteronomy 16:9-12:

Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest to *put* the sickle to the corn [archaic word for "grain"].

And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the Lord thy God*, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee:

And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

Numbers 28:26-31:

Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, after your weeks *be out*, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work:

But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year;

And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram,

A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;

And one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.

Ye shall offer *them* beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink offerings.

Leviticus 23:15-22:

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath [the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread], from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits unto the Lord.

And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be *for* a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the Lord.

Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *for* a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.

And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein: it shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: *I am* the Lord your God.

The seven weeks of counting tied together Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with Pentecost. Technically, because of the counting, Passover began the anticipation of Pentecost. Old rabbinical writings called Pentecost the “concluding feast” because it was understood as the conclusion of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At the time of the first Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread the children of Israel

left the bondage of Egypt. The children of Israel thought of the conclusion of that exodus as the giving of the law at Sinai, an event with which Pentecost came to be associated.⁴

The symbolic relationship of Passover to Pentecost does not end with Israel, however. The last Passover, Jesus Christ, represented our exodus from death and the bondage of the law. Christ's redeeming work made possible the great Pentecost when the gift of holy spirit was given to begin another administration, the Administration of Grace, when the law was fulfilled and made of no further effect. The parallels are significant and interesting. To many Israelites, Pentecost signified the giving of the law. To us, the Church of the Body, it signifies the giving of the holy spirit. Also, for us Pentecost is associated with our one true Passover, Jesus Christ, because Pentecost was the conclusion of what he came to make available by being the ultimate Passover lamb.

The three harvest times are also deeply significant. Jesus Christ was resurrected as the first harvest during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, being the firstfruits from the dead.⁵ Then at Pentecost that same year, Christianity began, in which believers are a harvest, having the firstfruits of the spirit.⁶ We are a kind of

4. J.H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2d ed. (London: Soncino Press, 1966), p. 521.

5. I Corinthians 15:20 and 23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

6. Romans 8:2 3: "And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the

firstfruits of God's creation.⁷ We in this Age of Grace have the firstfruits of the spirit, and we will meet Christ in the air when he returns to finally gather us together. The final, complete harvest will be at the return of Christ when all are resurrected. God's Word describes this as the harvest at the end of the world.⁸

The one-day feast called Pentecost began with the normal morning sacrifice of a lamb. The festive sacrifices of Pentecost included ten animals for a burnt offering, plus one kid of the goats, sacrificed for a sin offering, and two lambs for a peace offering. The sacrifices would be accompanied by offerings of leavened bread and drink offerings. In addition, the offerers would carry out the usual evening sacrifice of a lamb. Pentecost was to be a day of holy convocation, a special Sabbath in which no servile work was to be done. There was to be a tribute of a freewill offering given according to the measure with which God had blessed the giver. While harvesting, the Hebrews were instructed to leave the extra abundance in the field for others who had need of it, such as sojourners and the poor. The Israelites were to rejoice with their family, servants, and guests for all that with which God had blessed them. Pentecost was a festive time of thanksgiving, abundance, and rejoicing.

firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body."

7. James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

8. Matthew 13:38 and 39: "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

Over fifty days previously, Jesus Christ had not only been the Passover lamb, he also replaced every sacrifice for all time. He was the fulfillment of the law. He was the complete, final atonement. When all requirements were fulfilled, man was fully and completely redeemed. Thus the climax of Christ's accomplishments began over fifty days before, when Jesus Christ was selected and prepared as the Passover lamb. All the suffering which culminated in his death became vitally significant in the various aspects of redemption. The greatness of this redemption became available on Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-4:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind [as of a heavy breathing], and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Our redemption was not made possible by our working to please God, as had been the case under the law. Our redemption was made possible by God's working in Jesus Christ and offering him as the perfect sacrifice. Christ's redemptive work as our Passover was building toward Pentecost. With Pentecost, the magnifi-

cent Age of Grace was unveiled. The power of the holy spirit was given. Since that time the freewill offering of believers is to live and fellowship with God and use the mighty power He has given us.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ was our Passover lamb. He perfectly fulfilled the law regarding the sacrificial Passover lamb. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ replaced all the animal sacrifices of Old Testament law. His death was the complete atonement.

While no animal was capable of making atonement once and for all for sins, animal sacrifices did cover for the sins of Israel on a yearly basis. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament law were temporary substitutes until the time was right for God to send the complete and final sacrifice for all sin—His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is stated very clearly and beautifully in Hebrews.

Hebrews 9:22,25-28:

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 13:11 and 12:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Hebrews 10:1,10-12:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Because of Adam's sin, mankind became dead in trespasses and sins. It took a perfect, sinless human

being to atone for that sin and to make it possible for believers to be reconciled to God. It took a perfect human sacrifice to be the complete atonement for you and for me and for all people ever since his sacrifice.

If Jesus Christ had been God, he could never have been our Passover. He had to be a man, just as Adam had been.¹ Jesus was a man from among men, a lamb from the flock. He had the same potential to sin as Adam had had, yet he did not. Thus he could be the final Passover lamb.

John 1:29:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

I Corinthians 5:7:

. . . For even Christ our passover is [was] sacrificed for us.

I Peter 1:18 and 19

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

I have set before you and have covered in detail events recorded from the eighth of Nisan to Pentecost—two months of the most significant history of all time.

1. Romans 5:14: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

Indeed, this period is the fulcrum, the pivotal point in man's history. All events both before and after this time revolve around it.

The last week of Jesus' life before the crucifixion has to be the most stirring, heartrending time ever lived. It began victoriously as Jesus was acclaimed the Messiah on his entries and confronted his religious enemies with their hypocrisy. It ended in torture and suffering as his enemies appeared to gain the upper hand. Time and again the Lord Jesus Christ courageously obeyed his Father's will as he masterfully faced the cruel injustice of a host of hostile, evil men. Over and over again his life was unjustly maligned, called into question, and slandered. He was faced with unspeakable mental and physical torture. Yet throughout, Jesus never hurt or wronged a human being. On the contrary, he was the epitome of love, innocence, and courage.

Finally, Jesus was nailed to the cross. God had given His only-begotten Son to die for us. Jesus Christ, with utmost courage, was obedient to the death, even the death of the cross. What tremendous love God had for us in giving His only Son.

John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Yet the greatness of Jesus Christ does not lie in his suffering humiliation, and death. So-called Christianity

too often stops at the cross, magnifying Jesus' death as though his sacrifice alone made him our savior. But did God stop at Jesus Christ's crucifixion?

The greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that something special happened *after* Jesus died—something occurred which had never happened to any other human being: God raised Jesus Christ from the dead to die no more. The angel announced, "He is risen." That truth resounds throughout all time. But did God stop with Jesus Christ's resurrection?

After his resurrection, Jesus Christ was repeatedly seen by his followers. Over five hundred witnesses saw him. In his new spiritual body, he taught his apostles and disciples to prepare for a new age. But did God stop with the resurrected witness of Jesus Christ?

On the fortieth day after his resurrection Jesus Christ ascended to heaven before the steadfast gaze of his twelve apostles. He sat down in the heavenlies at the right hand of God, where he has been ever since. Before ascending, Jesus told his apostles that they should wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the comforter about which he had instructed them. But did God stop with Jesus Christ's ascension?

Ten days later when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the twelve apostles were given the comforter and received into manifestation power from on high. This was the beginning of the Church to which you and I belong. For the first time the gift of holy spirit was poured out on believers. Jesus Christ's life had been

leading up to this great pinnacle in human history, and with this outpouring came the culmination of what he had come to make available. Pentecost consummated the purpose of Jesus Christ's entire life, including his sacrifice as our Passover lamb. This began the Age of Grace, the greatest period in human history before Christ's return.

With the apostles' receiving power from on high, they were rejuvenated men. When Peter stood up on Pentecost in the Temple, he was absolutely convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. Peter also knew that he had a new power dynamically living within his soul. He knew that God had indeed poured His gift of holy spirit on him and that he was filled with the power from on high—that same unparalleled, incomparable power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

As a result of Jesus Christ's sacrificing of himself and God's raising him from the dead, it became possible for men and women to be born again by God's Spirit, filled with the power of the holy spirit, sons of God. As I John 3:1 so wonderfully records, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . ." These truths resound throughout God's Word, as the immensity of God's love is declared.

I John 4:8-10:

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

We need to walk each day with a greater vision of what God has given us. We must manifest the power from on high with ever-increasing confidence and boldness. When we live the principles of God's Word, walking by God's gift of spirit in each of us, we are proving in the senses world that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. We are completely, completely complete in him. What a thrilling opportunity is yours and mine when we begin to appreciate the significance of the man Jesus Christ: our example, our Passover, our risen lord, and our complete savior.

APPENDIX 1

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FEAST

The Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were very special, very holy occasions on the Hebrew calendar. The Passover meal was eaten at night, after the sunset beginning the fifteenth of Nisan. It was the first meal of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast continuing from the fifteenth through the twenty-first.

Vast preparations were necessary for the Passover meal and the rest of the Feast. Nisan was the first month on the Hebrew calendar. As every month, the beginning of Nisan was signaled by the blowing of trumpets on the first of Nisan.¹ Regarding the preparations that began on the first of Nisan, James Freeman

1. Numbers 10:10: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the Lord your God."

in his book *Manners and Customs of the Bible* gives some specific information.

These three festivals [the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles] were preceded by a season of preparation, called *peres*, which lasted fifteen days. During this time each person was expected to meditate on the solemnity of the feast, and to undergo whatever legal purifications might be necessary. This is referred to in John XI, 55. Roads, bridges, streets, and public water-tanks were repaired for the convenience of travelers.²

So with the start of the new year, the children of Israel would immediately begin anticipating and preparing for Passover and the Feast. This is indicated in the Gospel of John.

John 11:55:

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

This record in John 11:55 occurred before John 12:1 when Jesus arrived in Bethany "six days before the passover." According to Old Testament law and custom, the faithful Judeans probably began arriving in Jerusalem at least seven days beforehand "to purify themselves."³

Old Testament law proclaimed a man unclean if he touched a dead body, touched a grave, or was in a dwelling where a person had just died. To purify oneself from such

2. Freeman, *Manners and Customs*, p.70.

3. J.B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 32-36, 138-141, 230, 254.

uncleanness involved a seven-day cleansing ceremony.⁴

Numbers 19:11-21:

He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean.

And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

4. The concern regarding this ceremonial uncleanness in Jesus' time can be seen by the custom of whitewashing sepulchres so that they could be easily distinguished and avoided. In Matthew 23:27, Jesus referred to "Whited sepulchres" when describing the Pharisees.

And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.

And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

Numbers 31:19-24:

And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify *both* yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

And purify all *your* raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' *hair*, and all things made of wood.

And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This *is* the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses;

Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make *it* go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.

And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

A Judean was considered unclean not only for touching a dead person, touching a grave, or being indoors where a person had just died, but also if he touched something or someone who was unclean. All of these were defilements for which a Judean had to go through a cleansing process. There is also evidence that entry into the dwelling of a Gentile could defile one for the Passover.

Leviticus 7:21:

Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean *thing*, as the uncleanness of man, or *any* unclean beast, or any abominable unclean *thing*, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which *pertain* unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

Numbers 19:22:

And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even.

John 18:28:

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hail of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall [Pilate's judgment hail], lest they should be deified; but that they might eat the passover.

Anyone who was considered unclean had to arrange to be legally cleansed before Passover. To do this, defiled Judeans went to Jerusalem beforehand for their cleansing period. Since Levites performed the cleansing ceremony for people, they also went to Jerusalem before Passover. During the preparation period, the Levites also took care of their own personal cleansing

and prepared for their week of service during the Feast. The Temple was also cleansed if it had been defiled.

II Chronicles 29:4 and 5:

And he [King Hezekiah] brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street,

And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*.

Jerusalem was regarded as the holy city, the location of the Temple, a place set apart by God for the children of Israel. Because of this and the fact that it was the location of the Feast, Jerusalem was the designated place to purify and prepare oneself for the Passover.

Besides going to Jerusalem early for reasons of uncleanness, a person also went to a holy festival early to prepare himself mentally, physically, and spiritually for the occasion. This would include meditation on the significance of the upcoming sacrifice and feast.

Failure to be legally cleansed in time for the Passover and the Feast meant that the uncleansed were not permitted to participate. Such people, however, could observe an alternate Passover in the second month.

Numbers 9:5-12:

And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

And those men said unto him, We *are* defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel?

And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord.

The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*.

They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

Another practical and essential preparation for the Passover meal and the Feast was the selection of a Passover lamb. This selection was to take place on the tenth of Nisan, and the lamb was to be kept to the fourteenth.

Exodus 12:3-6:

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house:

And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

By the end of the fourteenth of Nisan, all leaven was to be put away from the houses. By Jesus Christ's time, the putting away of the leaven had become an elaborate and thorough ceremony involving a search for leaven by the light of an oil lamp. Any leaven or anything considered unclean which was found would be put out of each house.

Exodus 12:19:

Seven days [fifteenth through the twenty-first of Nisan] shall there be no leaven found in your houses.

Another facet in preparing for the Feast was the securing and preparing of a room in Jerusalem for the eating of the Passover meal. In the year under scrutiny, Jesus had two apostles do this.

Luke 22:8-13:

And he [Jesus] sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And be said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

A tremendous record of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread being kept in the days of Hezekiah is found in II Chronicles. Because of the uncleanness of the Temple and of the people, they had not been able to keep it the first month. Note the preparations and cleansing they carried out so they would be able to do it the second month.

II Chronicles 29:17-19,23,24,35,36:

Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord: so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof.

Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the Lord.

And they brought forth the he goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their bands upon them:

And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel.

And also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering. So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order.

And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was *done* suddenly.

II Chronicles 30:2,3,13-23:

For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.

And they arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast *them* into the brook Kidron.

Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord.

And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, *which they received* of the hand of the Levites.

For *there were* many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one *that was* not clean, to sanctify *them* unto the Lord.

For a multitude of the people, *even* many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one

That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though *he be* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary.

And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, *singing* with loud instruments unto the Lord.

And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers.

And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness.

What a beautiful record! Hezekiah and the people did their utmost to properly prepare and be cleansed for Passover. Although they fell short, God honored their hearts and, as verse 20 says, He “healed the people.”

Of all the preparations for the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the most significant was the actual slaying of the Passover lamb on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan.

Exodus 12:6:

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening ["between the evenings"].

Leviticus 23:5:

In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even ["between the evenings"] is the Lord's passover.

Joshua 5:10:

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

This meaningful sacrifice occurred on the fourteenth of Nisan. After the slaying of the lamb, it would then be prepared for eating at the Passover meal. This meal would be eaten after sunset which was the beginning of the fifteenth. For these reasons, the fourteenth of Nisan became known as a day of preparation or, as the Greek renders it, a day of *paraskeuē*.

Matthew 27:62:

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.

In Matthew 27:62, the words "the day or" are not in the Greek texts. The passage should read, "Now the

next day, that followed the preparation. - . ." The word "preparation" is *paraskeuē*. Although Matthew 27:62 occurs the day after the fourteenth, when it is properly translated from Greek the *paraskeuē* is not necessarily limited to just the single day of the fourteenth of Nisan. It could include the thirteenth as well, or even several days before.

Mark 15:42:

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.

Again in Mark 15:42, the words "the day" are not in the Greek texts. It simply reads, ". . . it was the preparation [*paraskeuē*], that is, before the sabbath." Although Mark 15:42 occurs on the fourteenth of Nisan, when the passage is properly translated, the phrase "the preparation" can include more than one day.

Luke 23:54:

And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

In Luke 23:54 the word "that" is not in the Greek text. According to many Greek manuscripts, the verse would properly be translated, "And it was a day of preparation.. - " Luke 23:54 occurs on the fourteenth of Nisan. However, when properly translated, it does not limit "the preparation" to one day.

John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the

bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

Although John 19:31 occurs on the fourteenth of Nisan, it does not limit “the preparation” to just one day.

John 19:42:

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

In John 19:42, the translators inserted the word “day.” Because “day” is not in the Greek texts, it is italicized. The verse simply reads, “. . . because of the Jews’ preparation; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” John 19:42 occurs on the fourteenth of Nisan. However, when properly translated, this verse does not limit “the preparation” to just one day.

The above verses (Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31,42) all show clearly that the fourteenth of Nisan is “a day of preparation,” the *paraskeuē*. However, according to the Greek texts, none of them limit “the preparation,” the *paraskeuē*, to just one day.

The sixth and final usage of *paraskeuē* is in the Gospel of John.

John 19:14:

And it was the preparation [*paraskeuē*] of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

John 19:14 records Jesus’ appearance before Pilate at about “the sixth hour,” noon by our reckoning. Since Jesus was put on the cross at the third hour, 9:00 A.M., on the fourteenth of Nisan, this cannot be the same day as the crucifixion (Mark 15:25). Logically it must be the day before the fourteenth. Very clearly John 19:14 occurs on the thirteenth of Nisan.

John 19:14 also states that it was “the preparation of the passover,” the *paraskeuē*. If “the preparation” was only on the fourteenth of Nisan, we would have a contradiction. However, we have shown that scripturally there is no reason to limit “the preparation” to just the fourteenth. The thirteenth of Nisan (as in John 19:14) and even several days before that may also be included. In a practical sense, preparations were being made since the beginning of Nisan.

It is also notable that four Greek manuscripts omit the phrase “and it was the preparation of the passover” in John 19:14. This includes MSS 264, 557, 747, and 2389. The many various readings of John 19:14 among the Greek manuscripts make it plausible that the phrase was inserted. With this omission, the proper translation of John 19:14 would be, “It was about the sixth hour and he saith to the Judeans, Behold your king!” Chronologically, John 19:14 had to occur on the thirteenth of Nisan.

To summarize, many preparations were carried out for the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This included the blowing of the trumpets to

begin the month, the physical preparations for those travelers going to the Feast, the legal cleansing and purification ceremonies, the mental and spiritual preparation of individuals, the selection of the Passover lamb, the cleansing of the Temple and the houses of all leaven and other unclean items, and, finally, the slaying of the Passover lamb.

Such was the importance the Israelites gave to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was one of the three major feasts to be attended annually by every adult male. When these preparations are considered with the traveling that was necessary, one can appreciate more deeply the significance of Jesus Christ, the true Passover.

APPENDIX 2

THE BIBILICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LEAVEN

In God's Word the term "leaven" has significance beyond its literal usage. But to understand its figurative significance, first we must accurately pinpoint its literal meaning. "Leaven" is not synonymous with "yeast." The following description of leaven by Bishop K.C. Pillai sets this forth clearly in a discussion on Eastern bread and breadmaking.

The bread made then, and even today in many parts of the world, is a round, flat bread which looks something like a pancake. . . . It is made with wheat flour and water, and is baked over hot coals or on hot rocks.... [This] flour which is freshly ground has some rising properties in itself, and no leavening is needed to make light, flavorful bread. Each housewife was supposed to grind her grain fresh each day. But, if a housewife wanted to be free from the task of grinding for a few days, she would grind enough in one day to last for several days. However, on the second day the flour would not rise as well, so leavening was necessary to make the bread light.

The leaven is a thin dough. A two or three gallon crock is filled with this thin dough made with wheat flour and water. The mouth of the crock is tied with a white linen cloth. Then the crock is set outside from morning until evening (6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.) for eleven days. At the end of the eleventh day it is brought into the kitchen. Then each time fresh bread is made for the family, two or three spoonfuls of leaven are taken out of the crock. This is put in the center of the bread, and it provides a wonderful taste and gives it a light texture.¹

Thus leaven was a thin dough made out of wheat flour and water. One of its purposes was to save the housewife the daily task of grinding wheat. It was set out for several days in a crock to ferment before it would be used to leaven bread. The leaven would then be placed in the center of the bread. From there, though its actions would be invisible from the outside, the leaven's properties would take effect throughout the entire "lump" or loaf of bread. This would be despite the fact that it was proportionately very small compared to the whole loaf. It would aid in the rising of the bread, make it flavorful, and give it a light texture.

Leaven, in itself, is neither evil nor good. Because of leaven's unique uses and properties, leaven is often used to illustrate certain truths to the Eastern mind. For instance, leaven is used in a positive sense in the following parables.

1. Bernita Jess, "Eastern Hospitality," adapted from the teachings of K.C. Pillai, *The Way Magazine*, Jan./Feb. 1971, pp. 15-17.

Matthew 13:33:

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Luke 13:20 and 21:

And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

In Matthew 13, Jesus Christ was illustrating the way the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven would spread throughout Israel. To many the kingdom's growth would be almost unnoticed. But eventually all of Israel would be affected. In Luke 13, Jesus Christ taught this same truth in reference to the Kingdom of God.

In the Old Testament, when the sacrifice of a peace offering was done in thanksgiving, it was to be accompanied by the offering of leavened bread.

Leviticus 7:13:

Besides the cakes, be shall offer *for* his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.

Amos 4:5:

And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God.

The Old Testament law further provided that the offerings on the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, were to include offerings of leavened bread.

Leviticus 23:15-17:

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits unto the Lord.

Leaven is also used Biblically with a negative connotation, The following passage is an example.

Matthew 16:6-12:

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye shall beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Here Jesus described the false doctrine of the Pharisees as “leaven.” The illustration is significant. As leaven is placed in a loaf of bread to unnoticeably spread and affect it from within, so the doctrine of the Pharisees had been introduced to Israel, unnoticeably spreading and affecting it from within. Here leaven is used to illustrate the corrupting effect of the Pharisee’s false doctrine. A similar usage of leaven is found in Galatians.

Galatians 5:7-10:

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

The people to whom Paul was writing had been receiving wrong doctrine that put them under legalism. Just a little of this legalistic teaching eventually resulted in all of them returning to the bondage of the law. Thus, the illustration is clear. As a little leaven unnoticeably affects an entire loaf from within, so a little false, legalistic doctrine affects an entire group of believers from within.

Leaven is again used to illustrate a negative situation in Corinthians.

I Corinthians 5:1,2,6-8:

It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The believers of Corinth had tolerated fornication and other wicked actions among them. Paul urged them to rid themselves of such wickedness and malice, calling it "leaven." They were to replace this evil with the "unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth." Again Paul shows that, as a little leaven affects an entire loaf from within, just a little of the wickedness they had tolerated would corrupt the entire body of believers at Corinth from within.

In encouraging them to rid themselves of this "leaven" of malice and wickedness, Paul utilizes the illustration

of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Under the law, the children of Israel were to put all leaven out of their houses for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Paul's use of this illustration in I Corinthians 5 indicates that leaven, during this feast, illustrated the corruption of 'wickedness and malice. In Exodus, the bondage of Egypt had been characterized by wickedness and malice on the part of their captors. This is the first part of leaven's twofold symbolism regarding this feast.

Exodus 12:15,18-20:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh thy, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. -

Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

The putting away of leaven, as Paul indicates in I Corinthians, represented the putting away of the corruption of malice and wickedness. During their bondage in Egypt, the children of Israel were continually faced with the malice and wickedness of their captors.

However, this is only part of leaven's significance in this context.

God may at times use an illustration or symbol that has more than one aspect to its significance. We have seen that Biblically leaven can be used in a positive and negative sense. In a negative sense, the leaven of Exodus 12 represented the wickedness Israel was influenced by during its captivity. Paul recognized this in his first letter to the Corinthians, as has rabbinical teaching throughout Israel's history. However, the leaven of Exodus 12 is also used in a positive sense to illustrate the privileges of freedom, when one has the time and liberty to partake of desired items. Observe Deuteronomy 16 and Exodus 12.

Deuteronomy 16:3:

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

Exodus 12:8:

And they [the children of Israeli shall eat the flesh [of the Passover lamb] in that night [the fifteenth of Nisan], roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

In Deuteronomy, the unleavened bread of the Feast is called "the bread of affliction." In Egypt the children of Israel had been in affliction and bondage. They had been forced to do without many desirable aspects of life

which took time to prepare and utilize. As leaven normally was a desirable ingredient in bread, the unleavened bread represented their captivity when so many desired items were done without.

This affliction and bondage is further indicated by the serving of bitter herbs at the Passover meal (Exodus 12:8). The bitter herbs represented the bitterness of the bondage of Egypt. The unleavened bread represented the affliction and bare subsistence they were forced to undergo during their captivity. These were eaten in remembrance of their bondage and to magnify the greatness of God's deliverance from it.

A further elucidation of leaven's significance here is also found in the latter part of Exodus 12, when the children of Israel began leaving Egypt.

Exodus 12:33,34,39:

And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, *We be all dead men.*

And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

As noted before, the preparation and use of leaven can be time-consuming. In their haste to leave Egypt,

the children of Israel “took their dough before it was leavened.” Deuteronomy 16:3 also noted that they left Egypt “in haste.” They did not have the time to leaven their dough. Thus, eating unleavened bread during this feast also indicated the haste of their departure from Egypt.

To summarize, leaven was normally a desirable ingredient in bread. It had slight rising properties and gave the bread a wonderful taste and light texture. By using it a housewife could be temporarily freed from the task of grinding fresh grain each day. However, the preparation and use of leaven did take time. When a little leaven is placed within the dough, it acts invisibly to affect the nature of the entire loaf from within.

Biblically, “leaven” is used to illustrate many truths. It is used to illustrate false doctrine and how it corrupts an entire group of people from within. It is used of wickedness and malice and the corrupting effect they have on a group of believers.

Leaven is also used Biblically to represent the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God, illustrating how the good news regarding them would spread throughout Israel, yet the kingdom would grow almost unnoticed until the whole had been affected. In the Old Testament, leaven was utilized in thanksgiving offerings as well as in the offerings of the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost.

But the first, and perhaps greatest, reference to leaven deals with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Here the

fulness of its significance is appreciated only with a knowledge of its physical properties and its other Biblical usages. The putting away of leaven illustrated the putting away of the malice and wickedness the children of Israel faced in Egypt. Conversely, it also represented the putting away of abundance, the desired items one is deprived of when under bondage. Thus, to eat bread without leaven was to eat “the bread of affliction.” Not having the time to leaven their dough as would normally be desired, the unleavened bread further indicated the haste with which the children of Israel left the bondage of Egypt.

Understanding leaven’s significance more fully, we can better appreciate Moses’ words regarding the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Exodus 13:3-10:

And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this *place*: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

This day came ye out in the month Abib.

And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the Lord.

Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand bath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt.

Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was not simply to commemorate the bondage of Egypt. Rather, it was to magnify the greatness of God's deliverance from that bondage. By stipulating the putting away of leaven and commanding the use of unleavened bread, God's deliverance was magnified from every conceivable viewpoint. This deliverance the children of Israel were to call to remembrance each year with the first feast of the year, the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

APPENDIX 3

JEW AND JUDEAN

The words "Jew" and "Jewish," in their various forms, are misleading terms in the English versions of the Bible. The word "Jew" is a relatively modern term applied to those who practice or claim a religion called for by the Old Testament and the Talmud.² Because of this, it has been wrongly assumed that most modern Jews are direct lineal descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Scholars, including those of Jewish background, have thoroughly documented that the majority of modern Jews are not lineal descendants of Shem, Abraham, or Jacob. Rather, they are predominantly descendants of an Asiatic tribe known as the Khazars, Gentiles who traced their lineage to Japheth. The Khazars as a whole

1. For further research of this subject, the reader is referred to the section of our bibliography entitled, "Sources for Further study of Appendix 3: 'Jew and Judean'."

2. The Talmud is a collection of rabbinical law and tradition which was put in its present written form two or three centuries after Christ.

nation converted to a form of the Judean religion practiced in the seventh or eighth century A.D.³

By the time of Christ, the Judean religion had deteriorated into Pharisaism which was based more upon their traditions (traditions later written into the Talmud) than the Scriptures. By the time the Khazars were converted seven centuries after Christ, this Pharisaic religion had degraded even further.

Having had no written language before their conversion, the Khazars adopted the Hebrew script, thus putting their own spoken language in written form. After centuries of development with influence from several other languages, this Khazar language became what is commonly known as Yiddish. Of course, in the process of this historically unique conversion, the Khazars took on many customs and words associated with their new religious beliefs.

From the seventh to the eleventh century A.D. the Khazar Empire, located in what is now known as western Russia, flourished. Some historians consider it to have been the most powerful empire of its day, stronger than even the contemporaneous empires of Rome and Islam. As the Khazar Empire declined, many Khazars gradually migrated into eastern Europe to form the cradle of modern Jewry. The evidence indicates that Khazar heritage dominates the genetic make-up of most modern Jews.⁴ As the Khazars' descendants settled in

3. Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York: Random House, 1976), pp. 180-200.

4. Ibid.

Europe and slowly began to disperse across the continent, they became associated with the Judeans of the Bible because of their religious beliefs and its influence on their language, writing, and culture.

European languages called the Khazar descendants by terms which gradually developed into the word "Jew." in the fourth century A.D., Jerome's Latin Vulgate had rendered "Judean" as *Iudaeus*. Over the centuries, *Iudaeus* developed into its contracted modern form of "Jew." In Middle English the word developed into many 'various forms: "Gyu," "Giu," "Gyw," "Iu," "Iuu," "Ieu," "Ieun," "Iuez," "Iwe," "Iow," "Iewe," "Ieue," "Iue," "Ive," "Iew," and, finally, "Jew." For example, in his original writings, Shakespeare used the spelling *Iewe*. Assuming the Khazar Jews to be descendants of the Biblical tribes and, therefore, assuming the word "Jew" to be the proper term for the *Judeans* of the Bible, "translators put the word "Jew" and its related words into the English Bible. It was first included in an English Bible in its present form of "Jew" in the eighteenth century.

Mother point of confusion relating to the twelve tribes has been the understanding of the words "Judea" (or "Judah") and "Israel." Most people consider them synonymous. Biblically they are not. Originally, Judah was a son of Jacob. Judah fathered only one of the tribes of Israel. Many centuries after the founding of the twelve tribes in the Old Testament, the tribes split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom kept the name of

“Israel” because ten of the twelve tribes were located there. The southern kingdom was called “Judah” or “Judea” because, though other tribes were represented (including all of Benjamin), the tribe of Judah was dominant. Over and over again God’s Word differentiates between the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Judeans by descent were only those of the House or Kingdom of Judah.

After the splitting of the twelve tribes, the terms “Judah” and “Judea” referred to the southern kingdom and to its geographical location. Both those who were natives of the kingdom of Judah (or descendants of natives) as well as those who practiced the religion of that people are thereafter called “Judeans.” Thus one could be a Judean by nationality and religion or a Judean singularly by religion. Being a Judean by religion did not then and still does not now make one a Judean by nationality or descent.

The Aramaic word for “Judeans” is *yhodya* (pronounced “ye-hood-ee-a”). The Hebrew is *yehudim*; the Greek is *loudalos*. All of these terms are properly translated “Judeans.” As can be seen, many descendants of the twelve tribes are not, racially speaking, “Judeans.”

By translating the word “Jew” instead of “Judean,” people have become utterly confused by associating many modern Jews of Khazar descent with the Judeans of the Bible. Most important, they also have related Biblical prophecies concerning both Israel and Judah to many modern Jews to whom these prophecies do not

pertain. This error has in turn kept numerous Bible students from understanding the distinction God’s Word makes between Judah and Israel. The confusion surrounding the entire subject can be avoided, at least in part, by adhering to the more accurate translation “Judean.”⁴

This issue should be clarified in order to dispel the confusion now surrounding the subject. Failure to understand these facts have compounded the confusion prevailing in Biblical studies as well as in society at large. The impact this has had on the world goes without saying. If the facts were understood, terms like “Semitic” and “anti-Semitic” would become void of meaning as they are commonly used. Those holding modern Jews responsible for Jesus’ death have no foundation to stand on. Those claiming the modern state of Israel to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy must reevaluate their statements according to Scripture and history. With an awareness of these facts, much confusion would be taken out of international affairs, and much needless prejudice could be eradicated.

With an accurate understanding of God’s Word, it should be clear that God desires every man and woman, irrespective of racial or religious background, to enjoy the same opportunity to hear about and believe upon the world’s one savior: Jesus Christ.

4. It is significant that in recent years a New Testament has been published in Israel that is a slight adaptation of the Authorized Version. It regularly substitutes “Judean” (and other words) for “Jew.” See *New Testament: Judaeon and Authorized Version* (Jerusalem: Judaeon Publishing House, 1970).

Romans 9:6-8:

... For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are not* the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Galatians 3:26-29:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew [Judean] nor Greek [Gentile], there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 6:15 and 16:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature [creation].

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and [even] upon the Israel of God.

God's Word makes it clear that in this Age of Grace, regardless of genetic background, only those who believe on Jesus Christ are the seed of Abraham and the Israel of God.

APPENDIX 4

THE WORD PASSOVER

Part of the confusion regarding the Passover is a result of misunderstanding the various ways the word "Passover" is used in God's Word. The Hebrew noun translated "Passover" is *pesach*. The verb form is *pasach* and means "to pass over."¹ *Pesach* is first used in Exodus 12:11 of "the Lord's passover." The context is the killing of the Passover lamb, the covering of the doorposts with the lamb's blood, and the eating of the Passover meal. The angel of death "passed over" all households who carried this command.

Biblically the word "Passover" has been used in several ways. One usage is in direct reference to the Passover lamb itself. We see this in Exodus 12.

1. The Aramaic word for "Passover" is *psska*. From this Aramaic word, the Greeks derived the term *pascha*.

Exodus 12:21:

. . . Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

Clearly the Israelites were to kill the Passover lamb, not to kill a certain event, action, or time period.

A second usage of “Passover” pertains to the slaughtering of the Passover lamb on the fourteenth of Nisan. Passover is used this way several times in the Word of God.

Leviticus 23:5:

In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even [“between the evenings”] is the Lord’s passover.

Numbers 9:5:

And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even [“between the evenings”]. . . .

Ezra 6:19:

And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

A third usage of the word “Passover” is in reference to the Passover meal which was eaten in the night beginning the fifteenth of Nisan.

Luke 22:8-13:

And he [Jesus] sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And, they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

The word “Passover” in the above scriptures refers to the Passover meal and the details associated with it. In context it must refer to more than just the lamb. Jesus sent them to find a room to eat the Passover meal and to make it ready.

A fourth major usage of the word “Passover” is in reference to the entire seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. This usage is the figure of speech *synecdoche* in which an important part is used to stand for the whole. Since the Passover sacrifice was the major part of the preparation for the Feast, and since the Passover meal was the most important part of the Feast, it is easy to see why the entire Feast was at times simply referred to as “the Passover.” Luke 22 capsulizes this usage.

Luke 22:1:

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

There also is an interesting reference by Josephus stating, “. . . we keep a feast for eight days, which is called *the feast of unleavened bread*.”² This statement indicates that first century Judeans at times included the day of the Passover sacrifice (the fourteenth of Nisan) with the seven-day Feast (the fifteenth through the twenty-first of Nisan) and referred to it as “a feast for eight days.”

It is important to distinguish what is being denoted when using the term Passover.³ In this work, *Jesus Christ Our Passover*, the usage of the word “Passover” will be clarified when it is essential to understanding the context. These usages should be understood in light of the four major usages outlined above. When referring to the seven-day Feast from the fifteenth through the twenty-first of Nisan, the term used will be “the Feast of Unleavened Bread.” In this way we will distinguish between the entire Feast and the initial sacrifice and meal called Passover.

2. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 2.15.1; Whiston, *Josephus: Complete Works*, p. 62.

3. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover*, preliminary note to reader.

In this major work on the Hebrew Passover, J.B. Segal attempts to clarify it by using the Hebrew word *pesah* to refer to the ceremonies (the sacrifice and meal) at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth, and then using the English word “Passover” to refer to these ceremonies as well as the week-long feast.

APPENDIX 5

WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

There are four great records in God’s Word telling of Jesus Christ’s earthly life and ministry. These four records are commonly known as the “Gospels” since they set forth the good news of Jesus’ life and work while he was on earth. The four are: the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of John.

Among theologians, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the “synoptic Gospels.” They are so called because these Gospels share a common outline of events, in contrast to the Gospel of John. However, in practice this categorization has been used to accentuate alleged discrepancies between John and the other three Gospels. To group the Gospels in this fashion is an Unscriptural tool brandished by critics of God’s Word to Support their theories.

In truth, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are all equally inspired records written by faithful men who received revelation from God.

II Timothy 3:16:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [*theopneustos*, God-breathed]. . . .

II Peter 1:21:

For the prophecy [the context is “prophecy of the scripture”] came not in old [at any] time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

The above passages are as true of each of the four Gospels, as well as every other portion of God’s Word. God inspired four writers to set forth the account of Jesus Christ’s life for our benefit.

John 14:26:

But the Comforter [referring to the holy spirit], *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he [the spirit] shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you.

John 15:26 and 27:

But when the Comforter [the spirit] is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he [the spirit] shall testify of me:

And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

The comforter, the gift of holy spirit, would reveal many wonderful things to Jesus’ disciples. Among these

things, it would bring to their remembrance the things Jesus Christ had said and done during his earthly life and ministry. God would reveal to them by way of His spirit what Jesus Christ had said and had done, even things to which they had been eyewitnesses. The four Gospels contain that revelation. The opening words in the Gospel of Luke further illustrate this truth.

Luke 1:1-4:

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration [*diegesis*, narration] of those things which are most surely believed among us,

Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

It seemed good to me [Luke] also, having had perfect [*akribōs*, accurate] understanding of all things from the very first [*anōthen*, from above], to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

That thou mightest know the certainty of those things [things relating to Jesus Christ’s earthly life and ministry], wherein thou hast been instructed.

As Luke declared, the knowledge revealed in the Gospels came “from above,” from God. The events are set forth as a narration, rather than as an epistle or another type of writing. The purpose of such a narration is to let individual believers know the certainty of the events in Jesus Christ’s life and ministry.

The question arises as to why *four* Gospels were necessary. Why didn’t God simply have one narrative set

forth encompassing the events of Jesus Christ's earthly life? To appreciate the answer to this question, one should recognize the four major aspects of Jesus Christ's earthly life and ministry. The prophets of old foretold these four aspects of the Messiah quite explicitly as they spoke of the "Branch" in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 23:5:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch [*tsemach*], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jeremiah 33:15:

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch [*tsemach*] of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

One quality the coming Branch would have, as prophesied by Jeremiah, would be that of a king descended from David. In order for Jesus to be the Messiah, he would have to be a descendant of David, inherit the right to the throne, and come as a king to Israel.

When one scrutinizes the four Gospels, it is the Gospel of Matthew which stands out as the revelation emphasizing Jesus Christ as the *king*. Only in Matthew do we find the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," and there it is used thirty-two times. There are ten parables unique to Matthew, all of which relate to a king. The genealogy

1. The Hebrew word *tsemach* is used twelve times in the Old Testament. Five of these times relate directly to Jesus Christ. The basic meaning of *tsemach* is "sprout, shoot, or offspring."

given in Matthew 1 includes a royal genealogy showing Jesus Christ's descent from David and Solomon. The phrase "son of David" occurs more in Matthew than in any other Gospel. Thus, in the Gospel of Matthew, the emphasis is on Jesus Christ as the king, the Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies.

However, the promised Branch would be more than a king. Look at Zechariah.

Zechariah 3:8:

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH [*tsemach*].

As the promised Branch, a major aspect of Jesus Christ's ministry would be the role of a *servant*. The Gospel which clearly emphasizes Jesus Christ as the servant is Mark. Mark records no genealogy, as a servant does not gain his position by descent. Mark begins with Jesus Christ's ministry. The word translated "lord" or "sir" (*kurios*) is used seventy-three times of Jesus Christ in the other three Gospels, but only three times in Mark, for a servant is not called a lord. Mark puts great stress on Jesus' actions in the service of God to his fellowman. Thus the Gospel of Mark emphasizes Jesus Christ as a servant willing to accept responsibility in serving and helping others.

Another major characteristic of the promised Branch is his humanity; in other words, the Branch would be a man.

Zechariah 6:12:

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH [*tsemach*]; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.

The Gospel which clearly emphasizes Jesus Christ as a man is the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 3:23-38 is a genealogy tracing Jesus' legal ancestry (through Joseph who had adopted him) back to Adam, the first man. There are eleven parables peculiar to Luke which emphasize the human aspect of his walk. He is depicted as a friend of publicans and sinners. The entire Gospel emphasizes his relationship with the common man. Thus, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus Christ is shown to be a perfect man, full of human tenderness and compassion.

The fourth major characteristic of the promised Branch is that he would be the Son of God.

Isaiah 4:2:

In that day shall the branch [*tsemach*] of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

Jesus Christ was the *tsemach*, the offspring, of the Lord. He came as God's Son. The Gospel which plainly emphasizes Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the Gospel of John. Several verses in John will demonstrate this emphasis.

John 1:14,18,34:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we

beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 20:31:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

In summary, God had promised a coming Branch, *tsemach*, who would have four major characteristics. He would be (1) a king, (2) a servant, (3) a man, and (4) the Son of God. While every Gospel encompasses all of these characteristics of Jesus Christ, each Gospel specifically emphasizes one of them.

This is a major reason four Gospels were necessary to fully reveal the greatness of Jesus Christ's earthly life and ministry. No one Gospel could comprehensively state Jesus Christ's multifaceted ministry with the full illumination it deserves. By having four Gospels written, God set forth Jesus Christ's life from every essential viewpoint for man's full appreciation and knowledge.

No one historical record, Biblical or otherwise, covers every detail regarding a given time period, event, or

person. Volumes have been written on the American revolution in the late eighteenth century. Even when these writings are accurate, they may cover the period of the revolution from different viewpoints with different details. This does not necessarily mean they are contradictory; rather, these works often corroborate, augment, supplement, and elucidate one another. The same is true of the four Gospels.

In John 10:35 Jesus Christ stated that “the scripture cannot be broken.” In other words, no scripture is contradictory to another scripture. With this as a guiding principle, one can study the four Gospels to see how accurately they fit with one another.² When it is God’s Word rightly divided, there will be no contradiction.

If there ever is an apparent discrepancy between two passages of scripture, the problem must lie in our understanding or in translation. Since “the scripture cannot be broken,” no one passage may be interpreted so that it is contradictory to another. Therefore, it is important to read accurately what is written without assuming or reading into it.

In studying Jesus Christ’s earthly life and ministry, one Gospel may give details regarding an event not recorded in another Gospel. Too often readers will assume that each Gospel must record all the details, not realizing God had a divine purpose in having four

Gospels written which together give the fullness of His revelation concerning Jesus Christ’s life and ministry. If certain details are included in one Gospel but not in another, it is by God’s own design and revelation that they were written in that fashion.

In studying the Gospels, one must use great discipline in order that similar events are not misconstrued to be identical and vice versa. Particular attention must be paid to subject, time, place, persons, etc. The approach must be to study God’s Word from the inside out, bringing out the Biblical usage of terms and expressions.

The recorded events are distributed among the Gospels so as to express the special design and character of each Gospel, and this is in perfect order and accuracy. The Gospels are four distinct presentations of the Messiah, which together form one perfect whole.

It is our responsibility as students of God’s Word to so study each Gospel in relation to the other three so that we can see their divine accuracy and revelation. Then we can fully understand and appreciate the all-important events of our savior’s earthly life.

2. This is in great contrast to many critics who search for and manufacture “contradictions” in attempts to show God’s Word does not fit.

APPENDIX 6

THE SABBATH DAY'S JOURNEY

Critics of God's Word always seem to look for discrepancies in the Word so that they can discredit it. Those of us who love God's Word do just the opposite: we study God's Word to discover how it fits and to see its accuracy. Once *we* understand the greatness of God's revelation, we can communicate it.

One apparent discrepancy the critics may cite pertains to a "sabbath day's journey." On the weekly Sabbath before the crucifixion, the disciples of Jesus traveled back and forth between Bethany and Jerusalem. Some would have us believe that, in doing this, the disciples and Jesus broke the law by going further than a Sabbath day's journey. To study this issue for ourselves, let us find out exactly what a Sabbath day's journey is.

According to ancient rabbinical writings, a Sabbath day's journey was equivalent to 2,000 cubits, approx-

imately 3,000 to 4,000 feet or, more simply, 3/5 or 4/5 of a mile. Rabbis and religious leaders of Christ's day set this as the limit a person could travel from his home on the Sabbath. One scripture they based this on is in Exodus 16.

Exodus 16:29:

See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

The setting was in the wilderness where God supplied the Israelites with manna six days of the week. On the sixth day, the day before the weekly Sabbath, He supplied twice as much so that the Hebrews would have plenty for both the sixth and seventh days. Read in context, the true meaning of this verse was that they were not to leave their dwellings in order to gather food on the seventh day. Many centuries later the Pharisees, who were the theologians of their day, developed the legalistic doctrine which allowed a person to travel just a certain distance on the Sabbath.

Another passage should be noted in this light.

Numbers 35:2 and 5:

Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in. . . .

And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand

cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits and the city *shall be* in the midst. . . .

These Levitical cities were given to the priests and the other Levites when the children of Israel entered the promised Land. They were to be cities measuring 2,000 cubits in each direction. Everything within this area was for the Levites. Another pertinent record is found in Joshua 3.

Joshua 3:3 and 4:

And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go. . . .

Here the children of Israel are preparing to cross the River Jordan into the Promised Land. The instructions were that they should remain two thousand cubits behind the ark so that they could keep their eyes on it and know which way they should go. One very practical reason for keeping a distance from the ark of the covenant was so that it could be visible to all. If two and one half million people surrounded the ark, very few would be able to see it.

Though this distance of two thousand cubits is Biblically significant, again it has nothing to do with a

Sabbath day or how *far* one could travel on a Sabbath. That belief was purely the result of rabbinic misinterpretation. In fact the Sabbath day's journey was an entirely man-made concept.

It is enlightening to see the intricacies of the legalistic doctrine of the Sabbath day's journey. Alfred Edersheim, in explicating from the Talmud what this doctrine was, detailed the following:

. . . supposing a number of small private houses to open into a common court, it would have been unlawful on the Sabbath to carry anything from one of these houses into the other. This difficulty is removed if all the families deposit before the Sabbath some food in the common court, when 'a connection' is established between the various houses, which makes them one dwelling. This was called the "Erubh of Courts." Similarly, an extension of what was allowed as a "Sabbath journey" might be secured by another "conunixture," the "Erubh" or "connection of boundaries." An ordinary Sabbath day's journey extended 2,000 cubits beyond one's dwelling. But if at the boundary of that 'journey,' a man deposited on the Friday food for two meals, he thereby constituted it his dwelling, and hence might go on for other 2,000 cubits. Lastly, there was another "Erubh," when narrow streets or blind alleys were connected into "a private dwelling" by laying a beam over the entrance, or extending a wire or rope along such streets and alleys. This, by a legal fiction, made them "a private dwelling," so that everything was lawful there which a man might do on the Sabbath in his own house.¹

These provisions from the Talmud for lengthening that distance are as ludicrous as the scriptural interpretation upon which that law was based. The Pharisees

1. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:777.

of Jesus' day were noted for flaunting such legalism, especially regarding the Sabbath.

There is little doubt that the expression was derived from this doctrine. However, the expression itself, "a sabbath day's journey," was not in strict accordance with the letter of the doctrine. We see this in Acts 1.

Acts 1:12:

Then returned they [the men of Galilee; eleven apostles] unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

This depicts the apostles' returning right after the ascension, which was from the Bethany area, on the east side of the Mount of Olives.² God's Word says Bethany was "a sabbath day's journey" from Jerusalem.

Since in the Gospels the disciples went back and forth between Bethany and Jerusalem on a Sabbath, the critics say they broke the law. However, their logic is faulty on several counts.

According to strict regulations of the Pharisees, a Sabbath day's journey was 2,000 cubits, at most, 4/5 of a mile. Bethany was at least twice that distance from Jerusalem. From this it is clear that the expression "sabbath day's journey" was just that: an expression. It was not used as a proper measurement. In all likelihood, it simply expressed the distance one would normally

2. Luke 24:50 and 51: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven,"

travel from his lodging on the Sabbath. If one lived in Bethany, to go any further away from home than Jerusalem and back would break with culture. It simply would not be done except under very special circumstances. Being so close to the Temple and the holy city of Jerusalem, there is every reason to believe that residents of Bethany would be allowed to visit the city and Temple on the Sabbath.³ However, even if legalistic Judeans would not take this small excursion, Jesus and his disciples did not feel bound to observe the strict legalism of the Pharisees. Again, Edersheim comments:

... there was scarcely any Divine ordinance, which the rabbis, by their tradition, rendered more fully void, and converted into "a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," than the Sabbath law. On the other hand, the Gospels bring before us Christ more frequently on the Sabbath than on any other festive occasion. It seemed to be his special day for working the work of his Father. On the Sabbath he preached in the synagogues; he taught in the Temple; he healed the sick; he came to the joyous meal with which the Jews were wont to close the day. Yet their opposition broke out most fiercely in proportion as he exhibited the true meaning and object of the Sabbath.⁴

3. One reason theologians have favored a "triumphal entry" on a Sunday is that it avoids having Jesus make the entry on a Sabbath. However then, by their own logic, Jesus came to Bethany from a far greater distance the Sabbath day before the entry (John 12:1 and 12). That would mean that Jesus traveled to Bethany (probably from Ephraim or Jericho) on a weekly Sabbath, a journey which is indisputably a much longer distance than from Bethany to Jerusalem. Such reasoning only causes problems. On the other hand, once one understands that they did travel from Bethany to Jerusalem on the Sabbath, all problems dissolve.

4. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958), p. 193.

The Sabbath, especially the weekly Sabbath, was a day of rest that was respected. It was a holy day to be set apart for God. However, the religious leaders of the day carried all their laws regarding the Sabbath to an extreme. This was apparent to Jesus, his disciples, and perhaps to more than a few common people of the day. They could see that the burdensome traditions of the religious leaders were making of none effect the true commandments of God. Doubtless many of them viewed those traditions as we view similar religious traditions today: as needless ceremonious theological trappings.

Throughout the Gospels the religious leaders rebuked Jesus and his disciples for breaking the Sabbath. Jesus' disciples "broke" the Sabbath by plucking corn and healing people (Matthew 12: 1-8 and Mark 3:1-5). One man after being healed, "broke" the Sabbath by carrying a bed.⁵ Each time Jesus reproved the leaders' legalism with scripture and examples of their hypocrisy. It was in this light that he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."⁶ The lesson was clear: the Sabbath was to be a blessing to man, not a religious dogma to put him in bondage. No doubt, this is one lesson the apostles learned well.

In conclusion, Jesus and the disciples did not break *God's* law by going back and forth between Bethany

5. The record of this is in John 5:7-13. The "bed" was a sleeping pallet.

6. This record is in Mark 2:27 and 28: "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

and Jerusalem on a Sabbath day. In light of Bethany's location and the way the expression "a sabbath day's journey" is used, it is doubtful that they even broke the custom of the common people in doing this. It simply expressed an approximate limit beyond which no one would normally travel on the Sabbath. The 2,000 cubit limit set by the Pharisees was certainly an unenforceable regulation that only the most religious heeded. It was surely not a rule to which Jesus and his followers felt bound, especially during the intense and exciting days surrounding the crucifixion. Culturally, as well as by Old Testament law, the Sabbath was a day of rest and worship.⁷ But God's Word never set it within the extreme legalistic confines propounded by the Pharisees.

How simple it is to go to God's Word and allow it to speak for itself. Legalism has never done anything but put people in bondage and give God-rejectors reason to criticize. How wonderful it is to know and appreciate the Word of God that has given us liberty!

7. It was as much a part of the Sabbath law to "keep It holy" as it was to rest. Going to the Temple or to synagogues was therefore acceptable. See Matthew 12:1; Luke 4:16 and 31; Acts 13:14,27,42,44; 15:21; 16:13; 18:4. The money changers would be considered as doing a religious service for the Sabbath by making available sacrifices and money for sacrifices.

APPENDIX 7

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED

Throughout the centuries, the subject of how Biblical prophecy is fulfilled has been greatly misunderstood. One of the reasons for this confusion is the failure to comprehend one simple principle—that *God's foreknowledge precedes predestination*. This truth must be clearly understood in order to successfully approach the topic of how Biblical prophecy is fulfilled.

First of all, we must firmly set in our minds that God perceives all time and all eternity as one overall picture rather than a series of events or segments. God's viewpoint can be compared to that of a soaring eagle's: as the eagle circles above the terrain, he is able to see the fox chasing the rabbit, the deer crossing the stream, the truck lumbering up the steep grade—all at once. In contrast, man's viewpoint is sequential like an inchworm's: he sees only from one blade of grass to the next.

Thus in God's omniscience, the past, the present, and the future are all equal realities. God sees the future as though it were happening in the present. But God does not necessarily directly *cause* the event of the future to take place. God will never overstep man's free will; rather, looking ahead He can see what choice will be made and therefore pronounce that it will be so. Thus God's foreknowledge precedes predestination.

Let us illustrate this principle further. If the lady of the house knows that some guests will be coming to visit and spend the night (foreknowledge), she can prepare a room for them (predestination). She does not possess them or force them to stay; but already knowing that they will want to spend the night, she can tell others about it and make the necessary and proper arrangements ahead of time.

Likewise God's foreknowledge does not possess or force people into action in conformity with His will. God has complete foreknowledge of what people will choose by their own volition. Understanding this truth of how God's foreknowledge precedes predestination, we can proceed to study how the prophecies of the Scripture are fulfilled.

In the English New Testament we have the translators' rendering of English from New Testament *koinē* Greek. There are points where the translation is not as precise as one would wish. At times the preconceived ideas and theology of the translator influences how he chooses to

translate a given passage. The average English reader is usually not even remotely aware of this.

This problem arises in the King James Version where translators decided to translate the Greek expression *hina plērōthē* as "that it might be fulfilled." This translation introduces the theological presupposition that God forces people to do certain things in order to fulfill a prophecy of Scripture. This idea simply cannot be true since this teaching turns God into a puppeteer, subjects man to fatalism, and robs him of his free choice.

The Greek conjunction *hina* often appears with the subjunctive mood. Its most common occurrence is in purpose or final clauses. Its usual translation into English is "in order that" or "that." However, *hina* has another, less common usage in Greek grammar. Dana and Mantey explain:

. . . we find *hina* used in result clauses, when it is translatable *so that*, but this usage is rare and it is a late *Koinē* development. . . . We agree with Abbot-Smith's statement in his *Lexicon*: 'In late writers, ecbatic, denoting result . . . so with the formula referring to the fulfillment of prophecy, *hina plērōthē*; Mt. 1:22; 2:15; 4:14; Jn. 13:18; al.'¹

Grammarians J.H. Moulton and A.T. Robertson likewise agree that *hina* with the subjunctive mood can indicate a result rather than a purpose.

1. H.B. Dana and R. Mantey, *A Manual of Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Riverside, N.J.: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 248-249, 285-286. Occasionally *hopos* is substituted for *hina* in this formula.

The first New Testament occurrence of *hina* being used in relation to the fulfillment of prophecy is in Matthew 1:22.

Matthew 1:22:

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying. . .

The Greek expression for “that it might be fulfilled” is *hina plērōthē*. If we read this as the King James Version has translated it, it would seem to say that all was done *in order* (purpose) to fulfill the prophecy. This would lead the unsuspecting reader to conclude that there was no choice in the matter, that all was done for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecy. If the Bible reader believes that the Word of God is the will of God, he would infer that the Lord forced the events of Jesus’ birth to fit with the prophecy. Clearly, the translators of the King James Version did not choose to utilize the word *hina*, with the subjunctive as indicating result.

A proper way to translate *hina plērōthē* in these cases would be “so that it was fulfilled” or “with the result that it was fulfilled.” Inserting this phrase clarifies many seemingly difficult verses and brings them in line with the profound truth that God’s foreknowledge precedes predestination. Translating Matthew 1:22 with the result clause indicated gives us the rightly-divided Word of God.

Matthew 1:22:

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled [with the result that it was fulfilled] which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying. . .

At the last supper Jesus spoke some words concerning Judas. Judas was never forced to comply with the prophecy of the Scripture. He, by his own free will, selected his course of action which resulted in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalms 41:9.

John 13:18:

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled [with the result that it was fulfilled], He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Some additional scriptures in which we could insert this more accurate phrase, “with the result that it was fulfilled,” are listed below.²

God does not control His people and overstep man’s free will. God knows beforehand what people will choose, and by revelation God reveals this knowledge to those who speak for Him. Then, when the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy arrives, people act out of their own free will. How satisfying it is to once again have the rightly-divided Word of God, knowing that God foreknows before He predestinates. Thereby His Word is fulfilled and man’s free will is never overstepped.

2. Matthew 2:15, 4:14, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 26:25, 27:35, Luke 21:22, John 12:38, 13:18, 15:25, 17:12, 18:9 and 32, 19:24, Romans 8:4.

APPENDIX 8

DESTROY THIS TEMPLE

When Jesus Christ was on “trial” before the Sanhedrin, many false witnesses brought accusations against him. One of the major charges was that Jesus claimed he would destroy the Temple and raise it again in three days. In making the accusation, the witness misrepresented what Jesus had actually said.

John 2:19:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

This verse contains figurative expression that was quite misunderstood by unbelievers in Jesus’ day, including those listening. It is even less understood today. Many of the believers with eyes to see and ears to hear did not really comprehend Jesus’ expression until after his resurrection.

When closely scrutinized in the context and compared with many clear scriptures on the subject, the figures of speech employed, *heterosis* and *hypocatastasis*, crystallize the emphatic truth in our understanding.

The word “destroy” is in the imperative mood. This is the figure of speech *heterosis*’ in which the imperative mood is exchanged for the indicative. Here the imperative phrase, “destroy this temple,” was the emphatic way of stating the simple fact: “You (the religious leaders who do not believe me) will destroy this temple.”

The word “temple,” by the figure of speech *hypocatastasis*,² is used to represent his body. This is readily apparent from verse 21, in which it says, “But he spake of the temple of his body.”

Jesus Christ as the true temple represented the body of Israel. Biblically the term “tabernacle” is often used of an individual’s physical body (II Corinthians 5:1 and 4, II Peter 1:13 and 14). The word “temple” is also used to signify a group of people (I Corinthians 3:16 and 17, 6:19, II Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:21). Jesus, in John 2:19, by using “temple” to signify his body, showed that he individually represented a group or body of people. In context, this group could only be the called-out of Israel, the Church of the Bride.³

1. For a full explanation of the figure of speech *heterosis*, see Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, pp. 5 10-534.

2. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, pp. 744-747. The figure *hypocatastasis* compares or represents by implication.

3. Jesus’ declaration in John 2:19 was by revelation from God. To Jesus Christ’s immediate knowledge, his reference was specifically to the body

The phrase “I will raise it up” is another very emphatic expression of *heterosis*, in which the active voice is exchanged for the passive. The figurative “I will raise it up,” which is in the active voice, literally means “I [the temple] will be raised up,” the passive voice. When Bible students attempt to literalize this phrase to mean that Jesus as God raised himself from the dead, they ignore the numerous clear scriptures regarding Jesus Christ’s position as the Son of God as well as his being raised from the dead by God. Interesting indeed is that the trinitarians acknowledge the figures of speech permeating the rest of the verse, but insist that this particular phrase, “I will raise it up,” is literal. That is dishonest and a willful wrong dividing of the Word of Truth. That is handling the Word of God deceitfully by interpreting it to fit erroneous theology.

Numerous scriptures show that God raised Jesus from the dead, not that Jesus raised himself.

Acts 3:15:

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Acts 4:10:

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified,

of Israel. However, in God’s foreknowledge, the statement was also applicable to the Church of the Body, the great Mystery which was not revealed until after Pentecost. See Ephesians 1:20-22, 3:6, Colossians 1:27. This Church of the Body, including believers called out of Israel as well as the Gentiles, came about when Israel rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. See Romans 9-11. Hence, Jesus Christ’s ministry was greater than even he knew when he made this statement.

whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Acts 5:30:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Acts 13:30:

But God raised him from the dead.

Romans 10:9:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Galatians 1:1:

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)

These are a few of the scriptures specifically stating that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Galatians 1:1 even specifies that “God the Father” raised him from the dead. This totally undermines the theory that Jesus is “God the Son” and that, as such, he raised himself from the dead.

The International Critical Commentary states: “God the Father is always designated as the agent of Christ’s resurrection. . . . Jesus is not represented as raising himself.”⁴

For the person who wants to be honest with God’s Word, it becomes readily apparent that, in John 2:19, “I will raise it up” is the figure of speech *heterosis* meaning

4. J.H. Bernard, *The International Critical Commentary: The Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s sons, 1929), 1:95.

“I will be raised up.” God had Jesus utilize the figure to emphasize that no matter what men did to Jesus Christ, he would still rise from the dead, for God would raise him. Nothing men could do would stop the resurrection—Jesus Christ would be raised up!

In summary, Jesus Christ’s declaration in John 2:19 is truly unique and significant, for Jesus Christ had just authoritatively ordered the money changers and those selling sacrifices to leave the Temple area. He had thrown over their tables. He had driven out their animals with a scourge of small cords. Then Jesus Christ spoke the words given to us in John 2:19 while standing in the courts of the literal Temple.

The awesome beauty and size of this Temple right before the people’s eyes added tremendous emphasis to Jesus Christ’s words. Jesus was not speaking of the literal Temple, but it is significant that he utilized it figuratively in his response.⁵

Jesus Christ emphatically and succinctly contrasted two great realities: (1) The destructive path down which the religious leaders were taking the nation, which would find its ultimate end in the death of Israel’s only hope, the Messiah, who was the true temple of whom the Temple of stone was only a temporary prophetic illustration, and (2) the victory he, as God’s Anointed and representative of the body of Israel, would bring to

5. The religious leaders of Judaism would soon reject Jesus as their Messiah and, as a result, the Temple of stone was destroyed in 70 A.D. see Luke 19:41-44, 21:5 and 6.

the nation by being bodily raised from the dead in three days.

We now understand the essence of his exclamation: “You will destroy Israel by having me, its Messiah, crucified; but in three days, I will be raised up again by God my Father.”

Jesus Christ’s statement as recorded in John 2:19 was a declaration the religious leaders of Judaism misunderstood, misinterpreted, and tried to use against him. However, we, as believers looking back on his resurrection, can see how wonderfully the Master expressed one of the greatest truths of all time: in spite of all the destructive actions of the enemy, he would indeed be raised from the dead.

APPENDIX 9

PETER'S DENIALS

In a scrutiny of the week before the crucifixion, few subjects have been the target of so much controversy as Peter’s denials. It is a classic example of disputation emanating from assumptions and a lack of studying the details of the Gospels by comparing them with one another. We have already handled the record in detail to demonstrate there were six denials, with a cock-crowing occurring after the third denial and another cock-crowing occurring after the sixth.

In this study we will focus on Jesus Christ’s prophecies of the denials and some noteworthy textual variations in Mark 14. Before delving into this subject, let us review the outline on the denials and the cock-crowings.

1. The first denial occurred while Jesus was before Annas. Peter was accused by a young female doorkeeper as he entered the door from the

street to the courtyard. A disciple “known unto the high priest” made arrangements for Peter to be allowed in. (John 18: 15-18)

2. The second denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. The accuser was a young maiden who served the high priest. The location of this denial was by the fire in the courtyard. Peter was sitting. This denial was made before all in that area. (Matthew 26:69 and 70, Luke 22:55-57, Mark 14:66-69)
3. The third denial also occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas, also by the fire in the courtyard. The accuser was a man. (Luke 22:58)

First cock-crowing (Mark 14:68b)

4. The fourth denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. It happened in the porch area, where the large door or gate was. The accuser was a maiden who served the high priest, a different maiden from the accuser who prompted denial number two. Judging from the location, she may have been one of the doorkeepers. (Matthew 26:71 and 72, Mark 14:69 and 70a)
5. The fifth denial occurred while Jesus was before Caiaphas. It happened in the courtyard area again with Peter standing next to the fire. This time there were several accusers that challenged him, citing his Galilean dialect as evidence of his discipleship to Jesus. After this denial, Peter began adamantly cursing and swearing, probably as an act

to convince them he was not a disciple. (Matthew 26:73 and 74a, Mark 14:70b and 71, John 18:25)

6. The sixth denial occurred immediately after the fifth at the fire in the courtyard. The accuser was a servant of the high priest who had been present at the arrest in the garden. There he had seen Peter and now he confidently and quickly affirmed the fifth accusation by recognizing Peter. While Peter yet spoke this denial, the cock crowed. (Luke 22:59 and 60a, John 18:26 and 27a)

Second cock-crowing (Matthew 26:74b, Mark 14:72a, Luke 22:60b, John 18:27b)

Tradition and theology have taught us that Peter only denied Jesus three times. But even from superficial observation this could not be true. One Gospel records a denial while Jesus was before Annas. Another Gospel records three denials while he was before Caiaphas. Already we have at least four denials. Three of the denials involve a young maiden accuser. Because of the use of the word “another,” at least two of the records involved distinctly different maidens. Two other denials involved a single male accuser. Again the word “another” teaches us they were different men. Yet, another denial involved several accusers. From this simple logic we see that there were at least five denials. There is absolutely no way the traditional teaching of three denials can possibly be correct if the Word of God is accurate. We only see the complete accuracy of God's Word when we recognize there were six denials and two cock-crowings.

Our investigation now takes us to Mark 14.

Mark 14:68:

But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Verse 68 records the first of two cock-crowings in Mark 14. It is the only record in any of the Gospels of the first cock-crowing. For this reason, many critics and theologians have chosen to delete it, citing manuscript sources which omit it. However, in determining which manuscript sources are accurate, we should take note of Jesus' prophecies.

Matthew 26:34:

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luke 22:34:

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

John 13:38:

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

None of the above prophecies limit Peter's denials to only three denials. However, each strongly implies that

1. The phrase "and the cock crew" is omitted by the Sinaitic Palimpsest, the Codex Sinaiticus, and the Codex Vaticanus. However, it is included by the Peshitta, Harklean, Vulgate, Codex Alexandrinus, a majority of manuscripts of the Byzantine family, and a multitude of other Greek manuscripts.

there would be a cock-crowing after the third denial. In the Gospel records, only Mark 14:68 records a cock-crowing that can be placed directly after Peter's third denial. Therefore, the many manuscripts including "and the cock crew" in Mark 14:68 must be accurate.

The prophecies recorded in Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:34, and John 13:38 were therefore fulfilled after Peter's first three denials and the first cock-crowing of Mark 14:68. However, there is no indication that Peter took notice of this first cock-crowing. It was not until three more denials, another cock-crowing, and Peter's glimpse of his tortured master that he called to mind the prophecies Jesus had spoken.

As noted in the first chapter of this book, there were four watches during the course of the night in New Testament times. The third watch lasted from approximately midnight to 3 A.M. by modern reckoning. It was called the "cock-crowing" watch. Most readers usually associate a cock-crowing with a time much closer to sunrise, since that is a common time for cocks to crow. Consequently, some have concluded that "the cock-crowing" was a figurative expression for the watch change when a Roman sentinel would call out or blow a bugle.

The situation, however, is in fact much simpler, because cocks actually did crow between midnight and 3 A.M. It was the peculiar habit of roosters in the Bible lands to crow three times during the course of the night: at approximately 12:30 A.M., 1:30 A.M., and 2:30 A.M.

This has been thoroughly documented by observations in modern Jerusalem over a period of twelve years, as well as from ancient writings and traditions from Judea and the entire Mediterranean area. It is from these three cock-crowings that the night watch from midnight to 3 A.M. became known as "the cock-crowing."²

In light of this, the prophecies recorded in Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:34, and John 13:38 must refer to the first cock-crowing. Each of these prophecies specifically states there would not be a cock-crowing before this, indicating he was referring to the first cock-crowing at about 12:30 A.M.

Furthermore, according to Luke 22:59, there was "about the space of one hour" between the third denial and the sixth. Since there were cock-crowings right after each of these two denials, there must have been "about the space of one hour" between the first cock-crowing and the second. Axiomatically, since the first cock-crowing was about 12:30 A.M., the second recorded cock-crowing would be at approximately 1:30 A.M., "about the space of one hour" later. This fits perfectly with what is known about the cock-crowings. The accuracy of God's Word is astounding.

Therefore, we can conclude that Peter's first three denials happened before 12:30 A.M., at which time the

first cock-crowing occurred. Peter's next three denials happened between 12:30 A.M. and 1:30 A.M., the second cock-crowing occurring about 1:30 A.M. Hence, about 1:30 A.M. on the thirteenth of Nisan, early on our Tuesday, Peter's eyes met those of his master, Jesus Christ. By this time Jesus' first trial appearance before the Sanhedrin was coming to a close. At this time, Peter turned and walked out into the street, weeping bitterly.

Now our study brings us back to Mark 14. We have already demonstrated that the King James Version accurately records the cock-crowing in Mark 14:68. However, in Mark 14:30 and 72 there are other textual variations which have stirred controversy.

Mark 14:30:

And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mark 14:72:

And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

In Mark 14:30 some manuscripts omit the word "twice." However, the vast majority of Aramaic and Greek manuscripts include it.³ So great is the manu-

2. A full explanation of the cock-crowings can be found in the following two articles by Dr. H. Kosmala of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem: "The Time of the Cock-Crow," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 2 (1963), pp. 118-120; and "The Time of the Cock-Crow (II)," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 6 (1968), pp. 132-134.

3. The word "twice" is omitted in Mark 14:30 by the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Bezae, and a few other Greek manuscripts. However, it is included in all the major Aramaic sources, the Codex Vaticanus, and an overwhelming majority of the other Greek manuscripts, as well as the Latin Vulgate.

script evidence favoring its inclusion that textual critics have been obliged to keep it, even if they favored deleting the “cock-crowing” of Mark 14:68. Scripturally, the truth that there were two separate and distinct cock-crowings establishes the validity of keeping the word “twice” in Mark 14:30.

In Mark 14:72 the word “twice” again appears. Again, the vast majority of manuscripts include it, though a few omit it.⁴ The fact that it refers back to Mark 14:30 where the word “twice” is included, that there were two cock-crowings, and that the overwhelming manuscript evidence contain the word “twice,” it can be determined that the word “twice” should be included in Mark 14:72.

In Mark 14:72, the phrase “the second time” has also been called into question. Again the manuscript evidence clearly favors including it.⁵ The fact that there were two cock-crowings, both recorded in Mark 14, conclusively establishes that the phrase “the second time” is correctly included in Mark 14:72.

All of these textual variations in Mark 14:30,68,72 indicate scribal attempts to “harmonize” Mark with the other Gospels, followed by further scribal changes

4. The word “twice” is omitted in Mark 14:72 by the Codex Sinaiticus and only a few other Greek and Latin manuscripts. It is included in all the major Aramaic sources, the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Vaticanus, and a vast majority of other Greek manuscripts, as well as the Latin Vulgate.

5. The phrase “the second time” is omitted by the Codex Sinaiticus and a few other Greek and Latin manuscripts. It is included by all the major Aramaic sources, the Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Vaticanus, and a vast majority of Greek manuscripts, as well as the Latin Vulgate.

because the manuscripts did not agree. The words that were wrongly deleted in some manuscripts, however, are not deleted in the King James Version.

Now there is one final question to answer. Which of the denials and cock-crowings fulfilled the prophecy of Mark 14:30? The answer to this question is dependent upon determining the proper translation and understanding of Mark 14:30 and 72.

The problem in properly understanding a difficult passage in God’s Word is often not overcoming an apparent discrepancy, but deciding which of a number of possible ways that scripture fits with the rest of God’s Word. That is the case with Mark 14:30 and 72. These verses may be translated and understood in more than one way. Each of these ways will fit with the rest of God’s Word. The phrase in question in both verses is given below.

Mark 14:30:

...before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mark 14:72:

... Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. . . .

As the verses are translated in the King James Version, the prophecy must have referred to the first three denials and both cock-crowings.⁶ Some manuscripts would support the following translation: “Before the

6. The word order of the King James Version is supported by many Greek manuscripts in Mark 14:72. These include the Codex Alexandrinus, a majority of Byzantine manuscripts, and numerous others.

cock crow twice, thrice thou shalt deny me.”⁷ Again, it would then have reference to the first three denials and both cock-crowings.

However, there is another possibility. Because there was no punctuation in the oldest Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, the placement of the comma was the decision of the translator. If one were to accept the King James translation but move the comma to before the word “twice,” the prophecy takes on a very different meaning. “Before the cock crow, twice thou shalt deny me thrice.” If this be the proper rendering, the prophecy refers to all six denials and the second cock-crowing. In like manner, with a similar punctuation change, the other translation would read, “Before the cock crow, twice thrice [“twice three times”] thou shalt deny me.” Again, the prophecy would then refer to all six denials and the second cock-crowing.

In considering the prophecy recorded in Mark 14:30 and 72, one should recall the context. At least twice Jesus had already prophesied of Peter’s denials and a cock-crowing before this prophecy recorded in Mark.⁸ Each time Peter and the disciples persistently refuted Jesus, claiming they would never deny him. On his third and final prophecy, Jesus emphatically added the word

7. The word order for this translation is supported by the Sinaitic Palimpsest, the Curetonian Syriac, the Peshitta, and the Codex Ephraemi. In Mark 14:72 it is supported by these sources as well as Codex Alexandrinus and numerous other Greek manuscripts.

8. The prophecy at the last supper is recorded in Luke 22:34 and John 13:38. The second prophecy, given on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, is recorded in Matthew 26:34.

“twice.” Whether the “twice” referred to the two cock-crowings or the two sets of three denials is not known. God’s Word fits either way. However, by adding the word “twice” Jesus completely and emphatically established his first two prophecies. In like manner, with his last three denials and the second cock-crowing, Peter’s denial of the lord was established and complete. It is no wonder that Peter, calling to mind all of Jesus’ prophecies, left the courtyard bitterly weeping. He, the leading apostle, had spurned his master in his most trying hour, despite all previous claims that he would not do so.

Thus, we see again that God’s Word fits from every conceivable angle. All of Jesus Christ’s prophecies regarding Peter’s denials and the cock-crowings were fulfilled. Peter denied Jesus three times. Then, about 12:30 A.M., the cock crowed the first time. Peter then denied Jesus three more times. After the last denial, at about 1:30 A.M., the cock crowed a second time. With that Peter saw his master, turned and walked out into the street, weeping bitterly. That is the accuracy of God’s Word.

APPENDIX 10

JUDAS' DEATH

Critics have experienced difficulty in reconciling the supposed two accounts of the death of Judas. The first assumed record of this is before the crucifixion in Matthew 27:5 which says, “. . . and [Judas] went and hanged himself.” In the other record, Acts 1:16-20, after the ascension, Peter graphically described Judas’ death as “. . . he burst asunder in the midst.” The traditional explanation for reconciling these two records is no explanation.

The factor often misunderstood is the time element. Although the Word of God suggests nothing as to the immediacy of Judas’ actions in Matthew 27:5 (commonly assumed to include his suicide), tradition sets the time soon after the betrayal of Jesus Christ and shortly before his crucifixion. However, Judas could not have killed himself before the crucifixion. A few days later,

after the crucifixion and resurrection, eleven apostles were gathered together (Luke 24:33-36, John 20:19-23) with Thomas, not Judas, absent according to John 20:24. Thus Judas must have been alive and present. Over eight days later, in John 20:26-29, all twelve apostles were together to see the risen Christ. This is confirmed by I Corinthians 15:5. Such is further evidence that Judas was alive and present. On the day of the ascension, Acts 1 and I Corinthians 15:7 indicate that all twelve apostles, including Judas, were present. Finally, the account in Acts 1:16-20, after the ascension, states a later time for Judas' death.

There is no valid evidence Judas' death happened prior to the ascension. God's Word clearly shows that Judas Iscariot was present with the apostles up to the time of the ascension. If one closely observes the pronouns in Acts 1, it is apparent that all twelve whom Jesus had chosen were with Jesus at the time of his ascension. However, after the ascension, there are indications of Judas' disappearance. In Acts 1:11 the angels refer to the apostles as "men of Galilee." Judas was the only non-Galilean among the twelve; therefore he must have left the presence of the other apostles after he witnessed the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and before the angels appeared. In Acts 1:13 the eleven men of Galilee were named one by one. Judas Iscariot is not listed. In Acts 1:18 Judas' death is described. Finally, in Acts 1:14-26, Judas is replaced by Matthias.

Had Judas died before the ascension, certainly Jesus Christ would have chosen a replacement for him. But it was Peter who assumed responsibility for replacing him after the ascension. If Judas had died before the ascension and Jesus had not replaced him, Peter would have no reason to assume Judas needed to be replaced.

Outside of one difficult verse, Matthew 27:5, there are no Gospel records of Judas' death. Not even Luke, the writer of Acts, makes mention in his Gospel of Judas' death. Without this singular Gospel account in Matthew, the record of Judas' death in Acts is clearly a post-ascension incident.

Since the significant differences between the two fields purchased in relation to Judas (Matthew 27:6-10, Acts 1:18 and 19) have already been adequately discussed in chapter 13, this study confines itself to the further study of Matthew 27:5. This singular Gospel account has been traditionally used to place the death of Judas much earlier than its actual occurrence. This research demonstrates that Matthew 27:5 was not an expression describing his death, but rather shows Judas in tremendous mental anguish.

Many commentators have accepted the translation "hanged" in Matthew 27:5, claiming this as a reference to Judas' suicide. They attempt to reconcile this hanging with Peter's description in Acts 1:18 by suggesting the rope upon which Judas was hanged broke. Obviously, this theory does not satisfactorily handle this problem

or the numerous other problems that arise if Matthew 27:5 refers to Judas' death.

The word translated "hanged himself" in the King James Version is *apanchomai* from the Greek word *apancho*. It is used only once in the New Testament. In classical literature it means "to strangle" or "to choke" and is used figuratively to mean to choke with anger or grief.¹ The word *apanchō* is a combination of *apo*, "away from," and *ancho*, "to squeeze or embrace." Consequently, it carries a negative connotation meaning "to squeeze from." "Choking" is a literal "squeezing the life from" whereas "choking with grief" is figurative as in our English expression "all choked up."

The Expositor's Greek Testament makes note of Grotius, who saw the difficulty with the two accounts and suggested that *apanchō* points to death by grief rather than a literal choking.² This is correct only to the extent that Judas did not die immediately in Matthew 27, but he was extremely grieved over the betrayal. He was carried away by grief and despair. Over a period of time he let this grief consume him until he could no longer tolerate it. This figurative usage is verified in the classical writings of Aristophanes.³

In addition, various Greek manuscripts indicate difficulties others have had with the word *apanchō* by

1. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. by Henry S. Jones (1843; 9th ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 174.
2. W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 6 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), 1:323.
3. Aristophanes *Vespae* 686.

their deliberate change of the text to more familiar words like *apeuchomai* which means "to wish a thing away."⁴ Judas wished he had never betrayed Jesus. This word fits with the word "repent" used in verse 3. Judas regretted what he had done and tried to turn away from his actions in his mind, to wish his thoughts away. One manuscript has the word *apopnigo*, which is also used figuratively "to choke with vexation or rage."⁵ A related word *pnigaliōn* means "nightmare." Another manuscript uses the word *apagō* meaning "to lead away."⁶ These variations in the text indicate misunderstanding of *apanchō* followed by deliberate and unwarranted attempts at clarification.

After Judas realized his grievous mistake in betraying his master, he threw down the money at the priest's feet and frantically withdrew himself from the people, being choked up or doubled over with grief. It was too much for him to cope with emotionally.

Was Judas' response in Matthew 27:5 so different from Peter's who, upon realizing his weakness in denying the Master, withdrew himself from the people and wept bitterly? (See Luke 22:62.) Both were emotionally distraught upon realizing their errors but the difference is obvious. Peter was able to overcome his trauma and again follow the Master. But Judas continued to let his emotions hold sway in his mind, so that when he saw Jesus Christ ascend, Judas Iscariot's distraught mind and

4. MSS 803, 875, 983, 3415, 1608, 2521, and 2539.
5. MS 273.
6. MS 827.

irrational thinking led him to the point that a spirit of suicide possessed his mind. At that point Judas departed for his own property and killed himself.

Understanding the meaning and usage of *apanchō* in Matthew 27:5 leaves all four Gospels without mention of the death of Judas. Having seen Jesus condemned, Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver back into the Temple and departed, emotionally choked up with grief. Finally, over forty days later when Jesus ascended, Judas reached the point of no return. Overwhelmed with internal turmoil, he left the other eleven apostles and committed suicide in a fashion common to his times. He impaled himself on a sharp instrument such as a sword or stake. His death was similar to Saul's, Israel's first king.⁷ As Peter described Judas' death in Acts 1:18, "...he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

Now Acts stands alone in describing the death of Judas after the ascension. There are no Gospel accounts of his suicide. Judas did not terminate his life until after the ascension and, consequently, Peter sought a replacement for Judas, assured that the Master would have done the same had such a situation developed before he ascended.

7. I Samuel 31:4: "...Saul took a sword, and fell upon it."

APPENDIX 11

JESUS BARABBAS

During the time of Pilate's governorship in Judea, there was a custom that the governor should release to the people the prisoner of their choice at the time of Passover as Matthew 27:15, Mark 15:6, Luke 23:17, and John 18:39 testify. At Passover in the year of Jesus' crucifixion, the populace was given the choice of having Pilate release from his custody Jesus Christ or a prisoner called Barabbas. In spite of Pilate's repeated offers to release Jesus Christ, the Judeans chose Barabbas.

In Matthew 27:16 and 17, according to several Caesarean manuscripts, the Sinaitic Palimpsest, the Palestinian Syriac lectionaries, and some of the principal manuscripts used by the church father Origen,¹ Barabbas' name was *Jesus* Barabbas. The Greek is *Iēsous Barabba*. The majority of the United Bible

1. Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1979), p.67.

Societies' text committee held that *Iēsous* was deliberately suppressed from many manuscripts for "reverential considerations."² In the words of Origen, "In the whole range of the scriptures, we know that no one who is a sinner (is called) Jesus."³

According to the United Bible Societies' text, Matthew 27:17 reads: "...whom will ye that I release unto you? Jesus Barabbas (Greek: *Iēsous ton Barabban*) or Jesus which is called Christ (Greek: *Iēsous ton legomenon Christon*)?"

The choice was between Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Christ. Jesus in Greek is *Iēsous*. *Iēsous* is from the Hebrew and Aramaic words meaning "*Jah* is Savior" (rendered "Joshua" in the Old Testament). *Jah* is a shortened form of *Jehovah* and is often translated "Lord." Christ is from the Greek *Christos* (corresponding to the Aramaic *mshika*), meaning "Messiah" or "the Anointed One." Barabbas is made up of the Aramaic words *br* meaning "son" and *aba* meaning "father." Thus, "Barabbas" from the Aramaic means "son of the father."

Rather than Jesus Christ, the Son of God the true Father, the Judeans chose instead Jesus Barabbas, Jesus the son of the father. The counterfeit was chosen by the crowd, a significant and telling choice. Jesus Barabbas, a murderer, was released instead of Jesus Christ, "the Prince of Life." Thus, death by crucifixion came to

2. Ibid., p. 68.

3. Ibid., p. 67.

Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter noted this in addressing the men of Israel.

Acts 3:13-15:

... the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he [Pilate] was determined to let *him* go.

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead. . . .

Jesus was the Son of God, his true Father. The father-son relationship between God and Jesus Christ was most intimate. Jesus used the Aramaic word *aba*⁴ to talk directly to God, as in Mark 14:36. This personal usage was never employed by the Judeans in their liturgical prayers. Among the Judeans, *aba* was used as a title for rabbis and as a person's name, but in prayers they would say "my Father" (*abi*) or, more often, "my Father who is in heaven."⁵ This is the closest they got to using the intimate term *aba* in reference to God.

For Jesus, *aba* was no ritualized component of some liturgical formula. It was the intimate term of address used by the Son of God talking to his Father. The term *aba* is defined as "the speech of the child to his father."⁶

4. The word *aba* is transliterated *abba*, with a double "b" in Greek. This indicates that the "b" in Aramaic was a hard, unaspirated letter.

5. Gerhard Kittel, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, English ed., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 1:5.

6. Ibid., p. 5 (quoting G. Dalman).

One may be a son by birth, and thus address his parental parent as “father,” simply on the basis of sonship. But the most intimate fellowship available between father and son is expressed in this word *aba*. In twentieth century vernacular, the expression could be translated “Daddy.” “Daddy” puts the relationship on the familiar basis—on comfortable, dependent, affectionate, “talking terms.” Thus, *aba* found its way into two great Church Epistles which demonstrate the Christian’s freedom from law and ritual, and underscore his intimate relationship with God as his Father.

Romans 8:15:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;
but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry,
Abba, Father.

Galatians 4:6:

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his
Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

The name “Barabbas” appears eleven times in the New Testament: five times in the Gospel of Matthew (27:16,17,20,21,26); three times in Mark (15:7,11,15); once in Luke (23:18); and two times in John (18:40 twice). It is only in Matthew 27:16 and 17 that the full name of “Jesus Barabbas” is found, and it is also only in Matthew that Pilate is represented as offering Barabbas as an alternate choice to the people. The other Gospels simply record Pilate’s offer to release Jesus Christ and the crowd’s response of cries for Barabbas.

According to John 18:40, Barabbas was a robber. Matthew 27:16 describes him as “a notable prisoner.” According to Mark 15:7 and Luke 23:19, Barabbas had been imprisoned for sedition and insurrection, during which he had committed murder.

The irony of the Judeans’ choice of Jesus Barabbas as their favorite son is greater than has hitherto been realized. Barabbas, as the son of the father, the murderer, was preferred over Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The people chose to have the counterfeit released, and they spurned the legitimate savior, the true Son of the Father, the Anointed One of God, the Messiah.

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